Encounter

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

APRIL 1959. VOL. XII. NO. 4

Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1
3s. per number (USA and Canada 75c.) Postage per copy: Inland 6d., Foreign 4½d.
Yearly subscription (including postage) £2: USA and Canada $7.50: India 12 rupees
US and Canadian subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.
30 East 60th Street New York 22. Second class mail privileges
authorised at New York, N.Y.

TROUBLED SLEEP (A STORY)	3	*Reynolds Price*
HISTORY AS LITERATURE	10	*George F. Kennan*
DE TOCQUEVILLE	17	*Edited by J. P. Mayer*
REVOLT AND COMMITMENT	23	*Stuart Holroyd*
PRIDE, SHAME, AND GUILT	28	*Geoffrey Gorer*
POETRY		
MY BOY CAME HOME	27	*Stefan George, tr. by Stephen Spender*
ART		
NEW ART BOOKS	35	*Edited by* DAVID SYLVESTER *Harold Rosenberg, W. H. Auden, Richard Wollheim, Stuart Hampshire, G. F. Hudson, Lawrence Gowing, Michael Kitson, John Irwin, Thomas B. Hess, Karl Miller, Basil Taylor, and a Publisher*
NOTES AND TOPICS		
LEAVIS AGAINST ELIOT	68	*Geoffrey Grigson*
A TASTE OF REALITY	70	*Colin MacInnes*
EDWIN MUIR	71	*Herbert Read*
ON A BOOK ENTITLED "LOLITA"	73	*Vladimir Nabokov*
BOOKS AND WRITERS		
THOMAS WOLFE AND THE KICKING SEASON	77	*Pamela Hansford Johnson*
ON THE RIGHTNESS OF MR. BERLIN	80	*Dwight Macdonald*
FACT AND FURY	86	*Kenneth Younger*
A WRITER OF OUR TIME	88	*K. W. Gransden*
CONRAD'S AMBIGUITY	90	*David Daiches*
FROM THE OTHER SHORE	92	
LETTERS	95	
AUTHORS	96	

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reynolds Price

Troubled Sleep

"HELP" was the first human thing it said after cracking down on me unseen and unnamed through the pitch-dark woods and the black honeysuckle and the snakes knee-deep surely on all sides, waiting to be waked up. "Help"—not crying or wanting but announcing calmly as if it knew what I needed most in all the world and was bringing it—to me, Edward Rodwell, nine years old, caught in terror in the August night alone with, all around me, noises I knew like my own name turned nameless new threats with dark for eyes and damp breaths that raked my bare neck and arms, and all because after supper I played Rummy with my cousin Falcon Rodwell on the porch while the light lasted and lost till I couldn't stand to lose another game and called Falc who was cheating as usual, a Cheater, and my father turned round in his chair and said in that case didn't I reckon I ought to go to bed?—but not a word to Falc about wasn't he sorry too and he grinning in hiding behind his solemn face as I marched away to sit in my empty room long as I could with only the sounds from the porch of them joking and remembering and, once, my mother's voice calling out to Falc, "Falc, you look to me like a lighthouse." I leaned out quietly to see what she meant, and she was right—there was Falc charging back and forth in the evening, happy with himself as if I had never been born, reaching out a hand here and there, closing it on the air and adding one more lightning bug to the jar he held, swarmed already with gentle syncopated light.

So I slipped out the back and walked the half-mile to this Dark Ring of mine and Falc's in the woods (for burying things and ceremonies) and sat down, thinking of nothing but ways to pay them back and win them back till full night came on and caught me in dark close as gloves, and I could only wait shivering in the heat for whatever would come to take me home where I was remembered no more or for the Devil to leap any minute into the Ring, dancing, or the Old Woman All Skin and Bones to lay a pale dry hand rattling on my shoulder and claim me for her own.

But the one word came again—"Help"—held out like a hard pear you could take or leave and, coming closer, sounds like "Who" and "Whoop," and I knew who it was and not seeing how or why, I thought things would get better from now on and that I could let loose the tears locked for fear in my eyes. They streamed down again hot as any acid, and I caught at them with my tongue and swallowed bitterly at the knot rising hard up through my chest and throat, laying all my misery at the back of my eyes because this was Falcon Rodwell, my cousin though I had cause to wonder why and my age, who had finally and under his own steam gone up to the bed we shared all summer and seeing I wasn't there, had known where I was and had broken through to me for reasons of his own that he might never tell, asking nobody's permission and coming in wide, lost circles and seeing (and keeping to himself as his cross to bear) who knew how many things that never got into

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any book, the things he always saw the minute the sun went down and the reasons he never went out after dark without speaking The Shields non-stop—"Who" and "Help" and whatever else made him breathe out because with his warm breath, he claimed, came enough germs to hold off anything the night could offer—but *coming*, and towards me, convinced of arriving in time to do what he had to do and not worried once at being the only thing on earth but snails to need half an hour to cover the path between our house and this Ring, considering he and I and Walter Parker, a Negro our age that we blindfolded sometimes and took with us, had worn a path to the Ring so deep you could have found your way there in total eclipse if you had made us tell you there was such a place, and you couldn't have done that.

So he stumbled into the Ring, not by the one right ceremonial way but tearing through the round wall of bushes, breaking every rule we had made, stepping on the graves of two frogs who died from eating B.B. shot we gave them, and looking like the night because the moon wasn't up, black against black trees with only the pieces of light across his forehead that were the tails of lightning bugs stuck there still warm and pulsing. He stopped ten feet from where I stood and waited for his envelope of germs to clear, resting up for whatever he thought came next.

I wanted to speak to let him know I was there—that I hoped he hadn't come for nothing—thinking if I could make him say one word, I would know why he was here—whether to say my mother had just now passed on unexpectedly in her chair, or my father had taken the first drink since the day I was born (when he went out to the wood shed, the only place you couldn't hear my mother screaming—I came feet-first—and fell down and promised to give it up if I lived and I did), or German paratroopers were falling on our house like butterflies, or that he was sorry. So "Falc——" I tried and that was it. The knot filled up my throat like dry bread.

"Nobody but Falc," he said and started in the direction of his name I had offered, holding out in front of him like somebody blind his arms that changed colour as he came the way a crow's wings will in the day—black if he folds them but blue as steel in flight, leaving you glad you noticed him. He came on till his fingers touched my chest. Then slow and straight like an old Indian at a Last Council, he took his seat on the dry ground. I tried to make out the shape of his head, but I couldn't yet except that row of light—maybe it wasn't Falc? But what except Falc smelled like that, like money at the roots of his hair?—so I sat beside him, near as all my doubts and griefs would let me, swallowing hard at my full throat.

How long we stayed that way I don't know—not making a sound and, as if wind was in our hair, our heads rolled back to the round hole in the trees over us that was the sky—but long enough for the stars, which were all the light we had, to begin doing what they normally did when I was that age and sad and looked at them long enough—wheeling down the sky to the left, slow, and when I almost shut my eyes, connecting up in the pictures I saw then wherever I looked—the elephant I prayed regularly to get and Johnny Weissmuller that I wrote letters to, asking if I could be Tarzan when he died, and a lot of people dancing—and the light left over fell down on Falc and me, so bleached and cool that all it touched—our arms and necks and folded legs—was like curved bones you find some days when you are out walking in the woods and bare bones laid neat in the leaves are the last thing you hope to meet.

But that went on in silence so deep my swallowing sounded like rock wrenched out of quarries, and we were so close together I could hear Falc's body making its own noises—his slow heart and whatever else was inside him putting up a roar like the sea and the dry sound like feet in sand of a hand rubbing down the calf of his leg—and I kept thinking we would touch, he being all I had, not by

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reaching out our hands on purpose but maybe by thinking of it till magic took over like Ouija boards. It takes two to work that though, and whatever Falc was thinking it wasn't on similar lines so we didn't meet. The only sign he gave of not being dead was—every time he could work one up—a long-range spit through the teeth even after my mother had warned him numerous times to give up the habit or go hard and dry before his time like Mr. Coley Dickerson, a man we knew who spat in public and was dry as a used whisk broom already, at only middle age.

But I was improving—physically, anyhow. My tears and my throat had eased up, and that energy went towards making up hurt questions to say, hot and fast, like "Falcon Rodwell, why in the world—if you are going to be my cousin and spend every summer with me and take what I give—do you do things like to-night?" But I never said it. Ask Falc a question like that, and you'd be in silence up to your ears. He didn't work that way—making up reasons for what he wanted to do. He did it and then if it was a bad idea (and nobody knew in advance what would strike Falc as a bad idea), he came and sat down where you were, even if it was the bathtub—not speaking or looking at you, but waiting to find his own way out of what he had done, and if that way didn't appear, well, waiting still like a box of Christmas oranges under the tree which if you don't open soon will sit till Doomsday, nailed shut and going bad by the minute.

The trouble was, my terror was gone and with it my joy that those sounds had been Falc's face and name, and I was left with only bitterness that wouldn't let me move—not first—and since moving first was my job, we might have stayed there all night if the sound of a plane hadn't started, out of sight in the back of our heads. We waited for it like our last hope, knowing the chances it had of crossing the hole in our trees were slim, and when we had all but given up, there it was for eight seconds—I counted them; I remember—with red and green lights answering each other back and forth like rhymes, taking soldiers most likely some place they would rather not go.

So Falc spoke. He had found a way. "Where do you wish we were?"—meaning to get an answer, trusting I knew what answer to give.

"Dead," I said—the thing I had to say to start his game and the thing I meant, this night.

"Who do you know that's dead?"—meaning me to fill in while he laid his plan.

All I could think of were two grandfathers and a grandmother I had never seen and Will Rogers and those frogs and an alligator named Popeye that was sent to me from Florida and lived for two years in my aquarium on lean bacon and was just learning to sing when we got hooked to the city water line with so much chlorine in it, and he stretched out and died. I told him those seven names that were dead, and he said that didn't sound to him such a wonderful group to be so anxious about joining so soon. But that didn't mean for me to stop.

"Where do you wish?" I asked.

He knew. "Some place with bears. Like Alaska."

"Yes, and we'd die there in five minutes."

"*You* might but I would go prepared and I would last. I would have a long knife and cut out a house in the ice and make us a cave to sleep in, and I would peel the skins off of bears for us to wrap up in when the sun went down—except for one bear that I would save named Maurice who would be our friend and stick by us. I would give little birthstone rings and sun shades to every Eskimo we met, and they would come to visit us and drag up whales for us to eat, and I would make a pact with them about how if they did unto us, we would do unto them and vice-versa."

"What if we didn't like eating whales?" I asked because he was saying "us" and "we" as if he had carried me with him.

"Pemmican," he said. "And the Eskimos would take us fishing, and we would divide up what we caught."

"And you would get two times more than anybody else."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, if I did, it would be because I was working two times harder than you and Walter." (So Walter was with us, making it a three-man party. I liked thinking of Walter, black amongst the snow, cool for the first time in his life.) "And if you didn't like it, you could leave. You and Walter would have to go anyhow when winter set in, but I would stay on, making daily broadcasts to the National Geographic Magazine about what my thermometer said and taking pictures for them, and if you wanted me to, I would play you a record of a song sometimes on Saturday nights and you could listen in. Then one night I would announce I was surrounded by blizzards and how even the Eskimos' blood was freezing fast and how I was alone with the dogs who were lying there staring at me, not bothering to hunt up any rabbits, just waiting for me to go to sleep. But Maurice would be at my side, and if I nodded or took a bath, he would slam off any hungry dog that got ideas—till the germs moved in, and everybody started having fever. Finally there wouldn't be anybody left but me, sitting there with Eskimos and dogs dead and frozen all around me and even Maurice stiff as a poker at my side and my flashlight batteries gone, and then I would run out of sulfa medicine, and there wouldn't be anything to do but say The Shields till my throat closed up and I couldn't whisper 'Help!' The germs would know and close in by dripping from the ceiling on to my face and grabbing hold of my fur suit and holding me so I couldn't reach the radio to SOS or even make my will, and nobody would ever hear of me again."

He had told me that story, or one similar, a hundred times, and he always went that way—alone as Custer ever was, staving off every natural foe for days, giving in to germs because you couldn't *see* germs. When we played cowboys, everybody else who had to die died of bullets or arrows, but Falc never died of anything but blood poison or brain fever or milk leg and even then only after he had called me over to where he lay and whispered his Last Will and Testament, leaving me his radio (the only one we knew of that you could get Hitler on, twenty-four hours a day) and making me give my oath to bury him in a copper casket and go to Sunday School and Church weekly and turn into a great scientist and destroy germs. I would cry and offer to go with him if he would let me, but it would be too late, and presently he would stop whispering and lower that curtain he kept at the back of his eyes, and I would fall on his chest and listen for his heart (not knowing what a heart sounded like), thinking to myself, "No radio on earth will ever be what Falcon Rodwell was to me."

But no matter about me—Falc had finished his dying and sat quiet—not from sadness but as if the story was a grand bird he had made out of nothing, and when it breathed and spread its wings, there was nothing left but to sit back and maybe smile and watch it take off and circle and sail out of sight forever. Then he cheered up and said, "I am going home now"—not seeing he had left me worse than ever with his sad, cold journey and his cheating and my father not trying to understand and the dark laid on me heavier than ice or what I knew about death.

He unfolded his legs and stood and waited. I was supposed to go first, but I sat still and "Falcon," I said, "we have got to lie down now and die in real life." I didn't know what he would say, only that I could count on him not to say "Why?"—the thing anybody else would want to know. Falc knew.

"How?" he asked and I thought he was with me, and *how?* I thought, was the last problem we had, not noticing that my troubles didn't have to be his. All I saw were ways to go for good and take Falc with me.

"Blood-Brothers?" I said, having tried two whole summers to make Falc cut his thumb a little and pass a few drops into mine and me into him, but every blade I produced he would look at and say, "Not surgical enough," though any number of times he let me go so far as to cut my own thumb before he decided No and left me with blood wasting all over the ground—who knew? maybe the one drop of Indian blood my

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mother said we had—unless Walter was there to stand in. (After Walter had Brothered with me for the third time, he wanted to know, "When you joining the Niggers, Ed?" And I seriously considered joining.) "Listen, Falc, we would just slice each other's thumbs real easy and lay them together and pass a little back and forth and let the rest run out on the Ring until we went to sleep and didn't wake up, and they would find us in the morning, drained-out and white as grass under logs, lying on the bloody Ring."

"There's one thing you forgot," he said—there always was—"Your personal salvation."

"Oh, no. Miss Ellie is in charge of that." (Miss Ellie taught my Sunday School.)

"What makes you so sure Miss Ellie is all that saved herself to go taking on a dozen others?"

"Miss Ellie is a saint."

"Saints don't grow on trees these days, and Miss Ellie wasn't any more baptised than you." (I was going to be a Methodist with my mother, but Falc was from the Baptist part of the Rodwells and knew all about how when Matthew 3:16 said, "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water," Matthew meant going *under*, head and foot, otherwise how could you come up out of it?) "So if we walk down to the creek, I'll give you Immersion and take it a second time myself to make sure, and we'll stay under and drown."

I felt that would be going back on my mother and on Miss Ellie, who was the only person I ever knew to send out Christmas cards with a picture of John (that she wouldn't call the Baptist) *pouring* water all over Jesus out of a bowl. So I reminded him, "I'm a born floater and you know it."

"Then we could go to a field and start running and run till our hearts popped and we fell out." But Falc could outrun me by miles, and I could see in my mind Falc saying "Go!" and us starting out together and Falc tearing ahead, looking back every now and then, finally seeing me crumple to the ground, and running back and deciding it was his duty now to give up and go home and tell my father. I kept that to myself though, and it looked like surrender was the one thing left—to feel our way home in our bare feet, knowing one of us was bound to step on a snail before we got there, and take whatever my father decided to give.

But then the moon came up, breaking into our piece of sky, looking like it ought to look—the way people say it does—and giving us light enough to read the finest print. I turned and when I had seen Falc—really seen—for the first time in three hours, he spoke.

"That's how," he said, pointing up at it.

"How?"

"The moon. The moon will make you crazy."

And it would. Would Walter think of standing in moonlight? No—if ever he was playing with us after dark and the moon rose, he would spread his hands over his head and say, "I don't know about you all, but I ain't risking the sense I got out in this stuff," and leave and we wouldn't see Walter till morning. And didn't everybody know what moonlight did to Tom-Boy Thompson who got left in it by mistake at the age of six and rose up next morning turned to a general embarrassment who collected stray dogs that followed his bicycle in bony dozens and wore flannel rags around his neck in the scorching weather without offering a reason and threw cats down garden house holes and was six years old every day of his life until he passed away, as a blessing, by the side of the road to Wise one evening when everybody was at Prayer Meeting and only his dogs, wandering into church and sniffing out his mother, told the tale.

"Falc," I said, "we will take off our clothes and stretch out in it and go to sleep and that will be the end of us."

"All right," he said—and I thought I had won—"but what if we don't die?"

"We'll get enough to send us crazy anyhow which will embarrass Daddy and Mother when they take us places."

"And I could act like the lady that played tunes to your Daddy on nothing but the window sill." (That was something my father

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had told us from when he was eighteen and took a guided tour of the State Hospital in Raleigh and got cornered by a very fine-looking lady who said she was North Carolina's finest pipe organist and a pupil of Edward MacDowell and would anybody like for her to prove it? My father said "Yes" and she played out "To a Wild Rose" with her long blue fingers—not singing or humming but silent, just on the concrete window sill that was an organ to her mind. And Falc lived for the day when he would be old enough to take the tour and see that lady if she was still alive and ask her to play.)

Then I pulled my sweat shirt over my head for what I reckoned was the last time and unbuckled my pants and thought and decided to leave them on so as to ease the shock on whoever would find us in the morning. I lay back on the cool ground and threw my arms straight back like I was in water and watched Falc undress exactly that far and lie down too.

"Falc," I said—it was the last thing I ever wanted to know—"what will you miss most?"

"Mosquitoes' singing," he said as if he had settled it years ago for some occasion like this. Then he was quiet. He hadn't wondered once what I would miss.

The moon had turned the Ring around us to the image of the moon, and when we took our places to one side of the centre (because nothing ever touched the centre but fire and Walter, who made the fire), the moon took our bodies, and I thought then we were two narrow boats left together in a silent bloodless world like those that Time Forgot where nothing ever moved or breathed but only quivered in the grip of that devouring light. Like that—together, I thought—we waited for sweet, avenging death.

But I have never slept well, and before I had thought of closing my eyes, I could hear Falc's breath slow down with longer spaces between each sigh till there was no sighing at all and maybe no breathing. I said "Falc?" but there was no answer, and I raised up to see him. His head had turned away from me already, and I leaned right over to find his face. Not a breath of anything came out of him, no more than if I had been in the valley of the Nile and struck the last blow at the sealed mouth of some great pharoah's ancient grave and had centuries of dry nothing rush out to meet me. "Falc?" I tried again and took his shoulder that was hard beneath my hand and cool and shook it. But Falc had never been too strong on touching people, and I didn't want to touch him now he couldn't draw back.

Falc had gone ahead as usual and left me here no better than when the night began and with this body by me now, cold and stiff as Maurice our bear and those poor Eskimos, and the moon still pouring down. How was I to know that once you tried you could go as easy as that, so easy that your closest friend, one foot away, couldn't say what breath had been your last or next-to-last? All I knew was, I had to follow. I owed Falc that much and where else was there left to go? Again I fell back and closed my eyes and waited, but I saw things that wouldn't let *anybody* sleep—me finally dying and coming to in a golden field that looked happy, with ripe wheat and trees and a river and rafts full of laughing people and, suddenly, Falc standing at the front of the biggest raft by the white sail, talking to the boys all around him and joking, and every now and then one of them would dive in the water and circle the raft and shout up to Falc a name I had never heard and he would notice them. I ran down to the bank and called out "Falc——" and he turned just his eyes towards the sound of his old name, but they looked straight through me and on past like I had never come all this way to join him. He turned back and the wind rose, and the raft drifted on out of my sight till all I could see was the top of Falc's head by the mast, but that went too and those boys' laughing was the only thing left.

Seeing that, *knowing* that for the first time brought tears I had never wept before, like nobody ought ever to have to weep, choked out like iron that lay blue and cold on my cheeks and wouldn't fall or dry.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then Falc stood up alive like fire—from sleep or from a game, I couldn't say—and said, "I am going to pee," and walked straight through the centre of the Ring and the ashes towards a low blackjack tree by the edge that we always peed against to kill it, but he walked past that and took the path away. For a long time I could hear him whispering The Shields. They died out though and enough time passed for even Falc to finish, and there wasn't even the sound of him *trying* to come back.

So with all that long day lying on me, I gave up and fell asleep and didn't dream and wasn't dreaming when I felt a hand on the centre of my chest. I was too much asleep to jump or shout, but I opened my eyes enough to see it was Falc, come back for his own reasons and feeling for my heart to know if the moon had worked. It hadn't and my heart was beating intolerably like a held bird but Falc didn't know where. For all he could feel and for all I showed him, I was gone beyond recall. He knelt a while longer. Then he walked around the Ring twice, saying words that sounded old to him and suitable, as a service, and I thought he would leave again, but next he was above me with his hands held out—first like I was a fire and he was cold, then with the palms turned up, and whatever olden rite it was to him, it was like giving to me. He stood that way whole minutes, turning every sad colour in the moonlight, holding out with both hands what he wasn't ever going to give—his life that I had asked for. Yet thinking I would never know or thank him or ask for more, he found his way. He lay down near me, not too near and in the deadly moon but in half-shade a yard away, and tired as I was, I waited and kept my body quiet till he was asleep. Then I turned towards him and—not knowing what it was like to be Falc—I laid my arm on his chest which was the part of him in the light, and sometime—sleeping, I think—he took my hand.

When they missed us from our bed and my father came out at midnight to lead us home, walking straight as any judge to the bench, he found us in this secret place where he knew we were, and all he could see, he smiled at—me in troubled sleep in the full moon still and Falcon, dark and gone like he didn't mean to return, but in each other's arms at least and breathing slow

---

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The Judges of our recent Authors' and Translators' Story Competition (organised in association with International P.E.N.) have decided to award a single prize of £200, to be divided equally between two entries. The prize-winners are:

HWANG SOON WON (author) and YU E. SANG (translator), both of Seoul, for *Shower*, translated from the Korean.

ARAVIND GOKHALE (author) and I. M. P. RAESIDE (translator) for *The Informer*, translated from the Marathi.

We shall be publishing *Shower* in our next issue.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George F. Kennan

History as Literature

IT IS, surely, a revealing thing that a historian should feel flattered to be invited into the company of poets and novelists and be asked to share with them his thoughts on the relation to each other of his form of writing and theirs. On the surface, after all, there would often seem to be a conflict, or at least a lack of mutual admiration, between these two branches of activity. When historians want really to condemn a fellow historian, they can think of nothing worse than to charge that what he writes is "pure fiction," "fairy tales," "inventions," "legends." To the poet, on the other hand, the historian obviously appears as a very pedestrian sort of fellow indeed, a bird without wings, a creature destined to crawl, in fact, laboriously on his belly through the husks and litter of documented fact which past generations have left behind them on the sands of time. This low regard of the exclusively literary person for the historian was never better or more authoritatively expressed than by Sir Philip Sidney. He described the historian as a man who

> ...ladened with old mouse-eaten records, authorising himself, for the most part, upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay... better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goes than how his own wit runs; curious for antiquities, and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks, and a tyrant in table-talk....

Beyond this, Sir Philip charged historians in general with precisely the sin they charge each other with, namely of inventing things and thus stealing the poet's thunder. "Although their lips sound of things done, and verity be written in their foreheads," he said, the historiographers

> ...have been glad to borrow both fashion and, perchance, weight of the poets; so Herodotus entitled the books of his history by the names of the Nine Muses; and both he, and all the rest that followed him, either stole or usurped, of poetry, their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles which no man could affirm; or, if that be denied me, long orations, put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which, it is certain, they never pronounced.

And finally, to cap his indictment, Sir Philip charged the historian with being an evil moral influence. The poet, he thought, could instil into his readers the taste for the good; but

> ...history being captive to the truth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness.

Whatever truth there may be in these bitter observations, it is not the whole truth; there is another side of the picture. There are ways in which history and literature are closely related. Not only do they sometimes approach each other in the problems of technical execution, but their tasks, I am persuaded, are kindred tasks.

GEORGE F. KENNAN, *whose article is based on an address given recently in New York to the P.E.N. Club, has published two volumes of his historical study of Soviet-American relations,* "RUSSIA LEAVES THE WAR" *and* "THE DECISION TO INTERVENE."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first thing that struck me, turning to this subject, was the obvious fact that whereas a portion of what went by the name of history was obviously literature, there was another portion of which that could not be said. There was, for example, a great body of historical material which did not particularly lend itself to literary development. It consisted only of the recitation of bald fact—of what one of my colleagues at Princeton called "lists"—of pure antiquarianism. This was, in fact, the earliest form of purely scientific historical material. There were other historical works which could perfectly well have been written in a literary way, but just weren't. The authors either had not cared to give them literary form or they were incapable of it. On the other hand, the shelves of any historical library were full of works to which the quality of literature obviously could not for an instant be denied. We have only to recall that both Theodor Mommsen and Winston Churchill were given the Nobel Prize for literature, though the writing that earned this distinction was historical.

WHAT did this mean? Did it mean that there was one portion of history which was purely science, and therefore dull and unpleasant to read, whereas another portion was art, embracing only, or primarily, æsthetic rather than scientific values? Not exactly; for it was at once apparent that the two categories overlapped—that a great deal of that portion of history which had greatest merit as science also fell into that category which also had the greatest merit as art. The two bodies of historical writing were not, then, mutually exclusive: on the contrary. Both good history and bad history could be written in a literary way or in a non-literary way, depending on the tastes and talents of the writer; but it did appear that there was apt to be—not always, but generally—a connection between good history and good writing. The discipline of attempting to say something gracefully and effectively in such a way as to bring out the deeper and more subtle tones seemed to be helpful to the scientific essence of the exercise, refining, rather than corrupting, the scientific conscience. Good language and style, in other words, were not essential to history, but they helped. History could exist, apart from these things. Laborious and graceless but conscientious, it could deserve the name of "worthy." It could command the respect of colleagues. Its authors could be respected members of historical associations. People could even be grateful to them for their patient industry and erudition. But their words would tend to die in the libraries. They would perhaps be used for reference; but not for much more. It was history as both science *and* literature, not history as science alone, which would reach beyond the specialised reader, contribute to public understanding of the past, and live in historical memory.

The next question that presented itself, then, was this: Was this quality—of being possibly and preferably literature, but not necessarily so—was this something that set history apart from other forms of scientific writing? Again, the answer seemed to be "no." Other forms of scientific writing—particularly those pertaining to the nature and behaviour of living beings—could, it seemed, likewise either have literary merit or not have it, without ceasing in either case to be science. Darwin had demonstrated that. (So, for that matter, had Rachel Carson, with *The Sea Around Us*.) Literary merit was, then, a possible attribute, not essential but also not wholly casual, of any non-fictional writing.

But was this not also true of what went more strictly by the name of literature itself: of such things as fiction and poetry and dramaturgy? Here, too, unfortunately, not all that was written was really literature. There was trash; there was pedantry; there was plodding, pedestrian effort, without grace. Non-literary literature had even come to be taken partly for granted in a portion, at least, of the publishing world. Robert Hillyer has called attention to a recent advertisement in which a young novelist was specifically recommended for the fact that he was *literate*, the implication being that had he not been, he would still have been a novelist;

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but, being literate, he was a very exceptional novelist and one ought to read him.

Literature, I may add, with some trepidation, even sometimes has its own "lists," just as history does. There have been novels made up in large parts of what might be called inventories of folklore. Even great writers have sometimes leaned in the direction of pure antiquarianism. In a recent article on the subject of literary criticism, Zola was charged with "trying to make an index of the world"; there are passages in Shakespeare that would come into this category; Pushkin, in *Eugene Onegin*, had a chapter that was largely folklorish in substance. This is by no means always reprehensible. Even the lists are sometimes literary; but then, this is true of history as well.

IF HISTORIANS sometimes write literature, what forms of literature do they write? In this day and age historians write only prose. There was a time, of course, long ago, when a considerable portion of such historical knowledge as did exist was recorded in verse. Then history and literature were indistinguishable in the sense that no one cared about facts for their own sake: fact and fancy were thoroughly mingled in the saga or the epic legend. In modern times, historians seldom burst into song (and if they did, nobody would be fooled).

Poets, of course, sometimes use their medium to write what purports to be history: Shakespeare's tragedies, or Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," or "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." But it is clear that this, while sometimes poetry, is rarely history. And the converse would certainly be true. Even Aristotle recognised this: "Put Herodotus into verse and he would remain a historian, not a poet."

The literary historian, then, writes prose, and it seems to me very much the same kind that the strictly literary person does. Sometimes, for example, he produces straight expository material: the expression of thought or analysis. Much of this is of the highest literary quality: Gibbon's magnificent cadences, Macaulay, Trevelyan.

Then there is atmosphere, and here, the historian has to be careful. He wasn't there; he didn't see it with his own eyes; or if he was and did, he isn't strictly speaking a historian: he is a writer of memoirs, which is a different thing. But here the historian, like the novelist, could be aided by his own powers of observation; perhaps, if it was a natural scene, it was one which he had known at a different time and in different circumstances. Perhaps his imagination could easily and reliably fill in the difference. Consider this passage from the American historian, Francis Parkman:

> ... More than eight months had passed since the catastrophe of St. Joseph. The winter was over, and that dreariest of seasons had come, the churlish forerunner of spring. Around Sainte Marie the forests were grey and bare, and, in the corn-fields, the oozy, half-thawed soil, studded with the sodden stalks of the last autumn's harvest, showed itself in patches through the melting snow. ...

Was this a legitimate use of atmosphere in a work of history? Unquestionably it was. Parkman was a man who had long observed the slow and depressing break-up of the New England winter. He needed no documentary sources to tell him that this was the way it was.

Or consider this from the delightful account of the Opium Wars, written a few years ago by Mr. Maurice Collis, a former member of the Indian Civil Service. In describing the trip up the Pearl River to Canton, in the early days of the 19th century, he says:

> To get the full bouquet of this farcical scene, you must picture the broad river puckered with little waves, the green sweep of the rice, on the horizon, blue hills; you must conjure the many sorts of passing craft, the Mandarin house-boats, dainty and lacquered, the streamers and lanterns of passenger boats, the high, tilted junks with demon-painted sterns; and you must plunge these images into a light more intense than we know in these countries, into a warmer wind and an air, purer and more scented than we can sniff except in dreams. ...

Was this an impermissible licence? I think not. True, Collis was not there at the time

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was writing about. But he did know the Pearl River in later decades, in days before Communism had changed the face of China; and it was easy for him to abstract from the scene, in his imagination, the steamers and other evidences of later industrialism and western influence; to picture the river as it would have been in the early decades of the 19th century; and to represent it in this way to his readers.

IN THE third type of literary prose which is to be found in history, straight narrative, the historian's task is more complicated. He can, of course, relate what occurred, in so far as the documents reveal it. He can, if he knows the subject matter well and if it lends itself to literary development, give to his presentation a sustained tension and cadence similar to that of good fictional narrative. But the material must be adequate to the treatment. The historian may not force it or stretch it. He may not supplement it. The essence of good literary narrative is, surely, a mixture of roundedness and simplification. Enough must be there to make the point; and what is redundant must be skilfully excluded. But the historian's narrative can be no more rounded than the historical evidence permits; nor can he simplify except where the sources, as sometimes happens, do it for him.

Above all, he is seldom at liberty to use dialogue with good conscience; for rarely do the actual recorded words of people, as distinct from hearsay and indirect attribution, emerge from the historical record in so unambiguous and authoritative a manner as to permit their confident use by the historian; and when they do so emerge, they seldom serve the uses of literary narrative as tidily and effectively as do those of fictional creation. Anyone who has had occasion to plough back through the documentary sources to run down the true wording of things famous people are said to have said so aptly on famous occasions, will know how seldom fact corresponds to legend, and how much the creative imagination of the raconteur has added to the tantalising inadequacy of the historical record.

The historian finds himself, of course, constantly under temptation to move, in his narrative as in its descriptions, from the bleak realm of what is known to have been to the more exciting and colourful world of what might very well have been and probably was. May he do so? In minor matters, and when the probability is very strong, I think he sometimes may. Professor Robert Palmer, writing about the Committee of Public Safety in France after the French Revolution, has described the occasion on which St.-Just, enraged by the decision of the Committee to arrest and execute Danton, "threw his hat into the fire and stormed out, slamming the door." Palmer confessed to me that he had had some torment of conscience as to whether he was justified in saying that St.-Just slammed the door. His evidence for it was only that one of the participants, in recording the incident, had written: *"Il nous a plantés là."* Palmer thought the image of slamming the door was the clearest rendition of the French slang; he had merely availed himself of the privilege of free translation, which is so often more accurate than literal translation.

On the last page of the second volume of the study I have been engaged in, on the early period of Soviet-American relations, I had occasion to describe the departure of one of the last semi-official Americans from Soviet territory in 1918. He and his companion, in passing the border, found themselves locked for a time on a railroad bridge spanning the border stream between Finland and the Soviet Union, with the gates at each end of the bridge closed against them. About this incident I wrote the following:

> For an hour and a half Wardwell and Davidson sat forlornly on the railway ties of the little bridge (from which the tracks had now been removed), confined between the two strife-torn worlds of thought and feeling which no one had been able to hold together.
>
> This was a moment to which, in view of the danger and strain and anxiety of the recent weeks, one had long looked forward; yet now that it was here it was like a death. The sky was leaden; a cold wind blew from the north-west. The

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> wooden shelter on the Finnish side was deserted. Above, on the Soviet side, the figure of a Red Guard, rifle slung on shoulder, greatcoat collar turned up against the wind, was silhouetted against the low scudding clouds. The little stream, hurrying to the Gulf of Finland, swirled past the wooden pilings and carried its eddies swiftly and silently away into the swamps below. Along the Soviet bank a tethered nanny goat, indifferent to all the ruin and all the tragedy, nibbled patiently at the sparse dying foliage. . . .

I must confess that if I were asked whether I could prove that the goat was actually there, the answer would be that I could not. I never saw such a scene in Russia *without* a goat. I myself passed through the same border region at the end of the last world war, amid similar conditions of human and seasonal desolation, and I did see a goat. But I am not positive that Wardwell did. It was the last of a thousand pages on this subject, and the chafing of three years of academic restraint may have inclined me, I fear, to a brief fling of scientific indiscipline.

In any case, justified or not justified, I was operating here on the limit beyond which the historian has no right to go. It is precisely in resisting the temptation to go further that his quality as a historian, as distinct from a literary person pure and simple, is most basically expressed. The true mark of his trade is the fact that he accepts a set of rules far more rigorous and confining than those which govern the novelist or the poet. He cannot create the pieces of his puzzle; he must attempt to put it together from those that he finds lying around. Not only that, but having found a few pieces, he cannot even order them to his heart's desire. They are ordered for him chronologically in advance by that most imperious of all historical masters: the documented date; and before this authority he must bow his head in unquestioning obedience.

Above all, he cannot fashion out of his raw material nice clean beginnings and endings to frame the burden of his tale. He can only cut in for a time on the endlessly moving stream of human affairs; the points he selects for entering it and leaving it are invariably arbitrary; and his work always suffers to some degree from this arbitrariness. No work of history ever begins soon enough or ends late enough to be wholly rounded.

For these reasons, the unities of the drama are seldom for the historian. His art, when it is an art at all, is an epic one, not dramatic. He can turn his little spotlight, for one period or another, on a small portion of a great and never-ending procession; but he cannot hope to define its origin or its destination.

It is these rules of the game which lead us to the deepest difference between the historian and the literary man; and this difference lies in the plane of reality to which, in the main, each addresses himself. It is with the intimate undercurrent of men's lives that the true literary artist is permitted to deal, and does deal, in his greatest moments: with the inner souls of men rather than with what Freud has called their *personæ*. It is precisely in stripping men of the external façade of personality, in showing them in all their shivering moral nakedness and helplessness, in their secret world of instincts and loves and fears and feelings, lost in the strange company of their own personal demons and protecting angels—it is in this that the poet or the novelist finds his true mission.

From all of this, the historian is normally barred. The materials to which he is restricted seldom shed light on it or lend themselves to its description. He comes nearest to it, perhaps, when he is writing pure biography; and indeed biography, with its accent on the doings of the individual as distinct from the doings of masses of individuals, is the point at which literature and history come closest to merging completely. It is an interesting reflection on the relationship of history to literature, in fact, that whereas biography is history, autobiography is literature. But in other forms of history, it is normally the *external* personality with which the writer is necessarily concerned.

Is this a bad thing? Is it a badge of inferiority on the breast of history as an art that this should be so?

Isaiah Berlin, in his discussion of Tolstoy's view of history, cites, as a parallel to it, Vir-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ginia Woolf's indictment of the public prophets of her own generation—Shaw and Wells and Arnold Bennett. She saw these people, Berlin says, as

> . . . blind materialists who did not begin to understand what it is that life truly consists of, who mistook its outer accidents, the unimportant aspects which lie outside the individual soul—the so-called social, economic, political realities—for that which alone is genuine, the individual experience, the specific relation of individuals to one another, the colours, smells, tastes, sounds, and movements, the jealousies, loves, hatreds, passions, the rare flashes of insight, the transforming moments, the ordinary day-to-day succession of private data which constitute all there is—which are reality.

The historian must accept with humility the truth that lies in these words. Few of us would deny, I think, the greater depth and subtlety and even importance of that plane of reality with which the novelist is permitted to concern himself. Of those of us who try to write history as literature there are few, I am sure, who do not sometimes peek longingly through the curtain into that more mysterious and more dangerous world in which the others are privileged to operate. Occasionally the historian even finds in his dusty documents evidence that sheds light on one fragment or another of what transpires in this other world, and when he does, he is filled with the excitement of discovery and with the longing to communicate it. But it is in just such moments that he must watch himself most closely. If the documents tell the story for him, he may let them do it. But they seldom do, and he may not rush ahead of them.

Yet he cannot accept the view that the plane of reality to which he is confined is without interest or importance. What he writes may be limited in psychological depth; but it has, if he is a good historian, the virtue of being as close to what actually occurred as human industry and conscience can make it. And this is something people have need to know about. This record which the historian produces—the record of what is known as distinct from what is felt—is an essential and indispensable component of all understanding of the human predicament. It is one of the ingredients from which even the novelist and the poet must distil their insights. The writing of history may lack the glamour and excitement of fiction; but it is a labour on which the greatest purity and integrity of purpose are never wasted. What is done in this quiet and disciplined realm can have, when it is done with honesty and insight and devotion, a dignity second to that of no other branch of writing.

The fact is that if history and literature are divided in the plane of reality to which they address themselves, they are united in the fact that for both of them the central purpose is the elicitation of truth. This is the mission of literature no less than of history. The fact that the detail of what is stated in a purely literary work may never have actually occurred, does not in any way controvert this fact. J. R. Tolkien has given us, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, a work of pure fantasy, dealing even with an imagined world and with a people other than human; and yet it is impregnated at every turn with truth.

Or let me take another example, from my own experience. In writing about Russia in the period of the Russian civil war of 1918 to 1920, I have known my share of anguish in the effort to be faithful to the true fabric of life—to describe things as they were, at whatever cost to my preconceived opinions or to the natural wish of every historian that he could discover some great guiding line or lesson in what he finds. But in reading Pasternak's *Zhivago*, which dealt with the same period, I was conscious of the fact that he was put to an anguish in no way less than my own in precisely this effort to be scrupulously true—true to his period, true to the nature of the human beings that populated it.

I, as a historian, was concerned with what can be proven to have occurred to men in the broader aspects of their political and social dealings with one another. Pasternak was concerned to reveal, out of the workings of the artist's sensitivity and intuition, as well as out of his own memories, the sort of thing that could and did happen to individuals in

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their intimate reactions to these events. His was a vastly greater contribution than mine; but that gives me no sense of shame or inadequacy. There is room for all kinds of workers in this particular vineyard; and if their devotion is to the eliciting of truth, they supplement each other. The literary artist needs the historian to keep him usefully close to the known and the possible. The historian needs the poet as a reminder of the inner world of his own clients, as an admonishment never to forget that he is dealing with real people, with phenomena whose true sources are individual, with impulses which are only outward reflections of the wonder, the anarchy, the tenderness, and the brutality of the individual human soul.

THE Communists implicitly recognise this fellowship of history and literature when they attack both western writers and historians on the point of objectivity. They deny, as is well known, with a sort of desperate vehemence, that such a thing as objectivity exists; they stamp a devotion to it as hypocritical, and they attempt to force on their own historians and writers an unabashed ideological partiality.

How terribly wrong they are in all of this. Of course there is no such thing as total objectivity; of course every historical treatise is a reflection of the intellectual and emotional world of its author, of the period and *niveau* of which he is a part, sometimes even of a given stage in his own life. Any work of history is as revealing, if not more so, in relation to the period in which it is written as in relation to the period with which it deals. This must always remain so; there is nothing sillier or duller than the effort on the part of a historian to conceal the fact that he is himself a part of what he writes.

But just because total objectivity is not attainable does not mean that the quest for it is itself not worth while. What is important is not that the writer should attain this ideal of total objectivity. What is important is that he should never stop trying to attain it—that in the effort to penetrate and understand reality, he should never cease to struggle against the shabbier and less worthy forms of subjectivity—that he should never abandon the effort to transcend, in his intellectual and æsthetic self, that little imp, the ego, with its greed and cowardice and pettiness, which sits invariably at the writer's elbow and makes improper suggestions.

There is nothing for us, then, but to continue on our related but not identical paths; poets and novelists in their enviable stratosphere of the inner man, historians on our humdrum terra firma among the debris of past generations. There is room for us both; occasionally we will help and enrich each other. We will continue, in any case, to be bound to one another by the magic of language, our common wonder and our common tool, and by the magnetism of that goal of truth to which we are both devoted, which we can never fully attain, but which we must never stop pursuing, and in the pursuit of which, alone, we will both find our own highest meaning and fruition.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Edited by J. P. Mayer

De Tocqueville

Unpublished Fragments

Intelligence of the People in America

IN EUROPE, it has been noted that division of work makes a man infinitely better at dealing with the detail with which he is concerned, but lessens his *general capacity*. A workman so employed becomes past master in his special function, but like a dumb brute in other respects. England, for example. Terrifying state of the working classes in that country. What makes the man of the people in America such an intelligent person is that division of labour might almost be said not to exist in America. Everyone does a little of everything. He does each job less well than the European who is exclusively occupied therewith, but his general capacity is a hundred times greater. A great reason for their superiority in the ordinary business of life and the government of society.

Concerning the Superiority of Morals to Laws

After serious reflection on the principles which make governments work, on those which sustain them and those which bring them to ruin; when one has spent much time carefully calculating the influence of laws, their relative virtue and their tendencies, one

In 1951 when I edited Tocqueville's DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, *I decided to base its text on the last edition published during the author's lifetime, the 13th.*

After examining the draft of the manuscript which is now at the Yale University Library, I realised that it differed considerably from this final text. But in view of the fragile state of the original manuscript and of the almost insurmountable difficulties presented by Tocqueville's handwriting, it would take years to decipher and restore. The printer's manuscript does not exist and all efforts to find it have been in vain.

The fragments we publish here, however, have a special character. They are notes which Tocqueville jotted down before he started writing his book during the years 1833–1838. (Tocqueville published the first part of the "Democracy" in 1835, the second in 1840.) These notes do not constitute a part of the draft manuscript.

A few of these notes have been published before in French by Gustave de Beaumont in Vol. VIII of his edition of Tocqueville's works. He inserted them rather arbitrarily into Tocqueville's American Notebooks which was entirely unjustified. Most of them are published here for the first time.

There are, consequently, four stages in the gestation of the DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: *1. The American Notebooks (which I published in Vol. V, 1 of my edition of the* OEUVRES COMPLÈTES). *2. The preparatory stage to which the present fragments belong. 3. The draft manuscript. Lastly, the printer's lost manuscript.*

J. P. M.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is always confronted with the fact that above all these considerations, beyond all these laws one comes up against a greater power, and that is the *spirit* and the *morals* of the people, its *character*. The best laws cannot make a constitution work in spite of morals; morals can turn the worst laws to advantage. That is a common-place truth, but one to which my studies are always bringing me back. It is the central point in my conception. I see it at the end of all my reflections.

Still, laws help to form the spirit, the morals, and the character of a people. But in what proportion? That is the great problem to which one cannot pay too much attention. I believe that there exists in these matters something both permanent and independent of them.

Influence of Morals on Laws

What could be more aristocratic than our electoral laws for two hundred thousand electors. . . . Nonetheless, morals are continually driving us towards an unlimited democracy and in practice we move daily in that direction.

The English forty-shilling franchise (Blackstone, vol. I, chap. II) dates from the time of Henry VI. With the continual diminution in the value of money since that time the law has become more and more democratic. But morals remain aristocratic and hold up the progress of democracy in spite of the law.

Political Assemblies

The larger the number of members, the greater the opportunity for oligarchic control by a few.

Difference between Patriotism in Ancient and Modern Times

In antiquity each nation thought of itself as a little separate human entity which had its destiny, gods, morals, particular opinions, and very complete individuality.

That necessarily gave patriotism an exclusive, passionate, fierce, and individual character which it can no longer have.

Nowadays when the unity of God and the unity of the human race are patent to all, and when men are becoming more and more like one another, sentiment must be divided between philanthropy and patriotism.

So true is this that those modern peoples who keep most of the ancient feeling, are those that are, or think they are, most set apart from the others.

One should not be surprised at that nor blame our contemporaries excessively. It is due to a general cause which did not come into play in antiquity and, had it done so, would probably have produced the same effects.

Accidental Causes

WHEN equality is suddenly established among a people, a whole mass of citizens find themselves independent and masters of themselves for the first time. This new situation astonishes them and frightens them. They are not precisely aware of the extent of their duties or of their rights, and while troubled thus by doubts and ignorance of their own selves, they come up against the government and fall easily into its arms and call on it to help them.

So the power of government is naturally greater among a people that has attained equality as a result of a revolution than among any other people.

Note: This should come, I think, among the accidental causes after mentioning that the weakness and isolation of the citizens in democratic countries make them an easy prey to the central power. Must show that this is especially true after a democratic revolution which has brought independence to a great number of people, either by lifting them above themselves or by lowering those who were more highly placed around them, so that they find themselves surprised and, so to say, frightened by their isolation. They cannot see clearly either what they are or what they should be. The central government, which this same equality has made strong, catches them in the midst of this hesitation and this ignorance, and easily grasps the power of directing them. Must take care that this does not get confused. . . .

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No. Here I want to illustrate how the government can do things which no power before it had done. But perhaps this idea might be introduced in narrative form. . . .

On Centralisation

WHEN one talks about centralisation one beats about endlessly in the dark until one has made the distinction between centralisation of government and administrative centralisation.

Praise and blame are distributed without knowing why.

There are people who cite as one of the advantages of centralisation the present system under which everything converges on a supreme court. They cite the old system of the parliaments among the proofs of the ills caused by decentralisation. They do not see that the system of parliaments was a gross abuse and not a natural consequence of the system of decentralisation. If there is one thing in the world that is a necessity for a nation, it is the unity of the law. For the law to be *one*, two things are necessary: First—that it derives from one authority only. Second—that it is interpreted by one authority only. For interpreting the law is itself, in some form, a way of making it. That is how all the American republics have understood the matter. A judicial system under which seventeen sovereign courts could interpret the same law, at the same time, about the same question in seventeen different ways is a political monstrosity. For a nation to support such a break-up of justice without itself being broken up, suggests that in that nation real power was in other hands than those of the judiciary; and that is what happened in France where the king could easily make his will prevail in the courts in all essentially political matters involving vital state interests, and he only allowed anarchy to prevail in matters of secondary importance which had only a restricted influence on the general course of affairs. That was a necessary remedy but one almost as great as the disease. Instead of being the business of a central judicial power, interpretation was in the hands of an arbitrary authority.

De Tocqueville by Daumier

France under the old régime, although already much too centralised in many respects, was clearly not sufficiently so. And when the partisans of decentralisation take issue on that ground, they are making a mistake. They defend something that they ought to begin by granting.

Note: The American Union which is a *confederation* is more centralised in this respect than was the *absolute monarchy* in France.

What caused the greatest misfortune in France was that there were excellent principles of which we have only known, and suffered, the exaggerated consequences. A strange predicament! We have often experienced the abuse of something without experiencing the thing itself. Decentralisation is one of those matters. Apart from our continental position, which has always made us feel more acutely the need for concentration of power, decentralisation has never appeared to us as anything but a break-up of the essential rights of sovereignty, that is to say, as the most oppressively active agent of anarchy. Even nowadays we try in vain: the word decentralisation only conveys to our minds a host of little sovereigns, judging sovereignty, administering justice, coining money. And we even find it very difficult to conceive of power thus broken up in other hands than that of a jealous, haughty, exclusive aristocracy, *inde irae*. England, on the other hand, alone among the peoples of Europe has had this good fortune that from the beginning central power was to a great extent ready-made. In that country the system of decentralisation, restricted from the beginning to proper limits, has attached to it nothing but notions of order,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prosperity, and glory. The system of decentralisation has made, and still makes, the strength of England. England has had strong despotic kings at a time when the kingship was too primitive to want to undertake everything. The kings established centralisation of government; morals and the state of society caused administrative decentralisation.

One must not err. It is democratic governments that attain administrative centralisation quickest and lose their political liberty. Aristocracies carry on the struggle much longer, because the powers of resistance are greater in each part of the body social so organised.

Thus, in France, when the King intervened in the administration of justice, there clearly were the abuses of centralisation of government; when, on the other hand, the courts were free to establish judicial anarchy, everyone could feel the abuse of administrative decentralisation. But no one saw the precise limits of the one and the other.

Democracy and the Taste for Liberty

WHAT is most important for democracy is not that great fortunes should not exist, but that great fortunes should not remain in the same hands. In that way there are rich men, but they do not form a class.

It may be that trade and industry are creating greater private fortunes in America now than sixty years ago. But the abolition of rights of primogeniture and entail have brought it about that the democratic passions, instincts, maxims, and tastes are more in the ascendant now than they were sixty years ago.

Moreover, equality of political rights has introduced a powerful new element of democracy.

American society has always been in its nature democratic, the Revolution has brought democratic principles into their laws.

I should like to have explained to me how one can expect a man, who has formed habits of obedience to an external and arbitrary will in almost all the actions of his life, and especially in those that touch the human heart most closely, to conceive a real taste for the amplitude of political liberty and for active independence. Communal institutions not only teach *the art of using liberty*, but also instil the *real taste* for liberty. Without them a people's taste for political liberty is like the desires of a child or the impetuous aspirations of a young man, which the first obstacle will calm and quench.

Great Men of the First Period of the Republic

THEIR enlightenment. Their true patriotism. Their high character. Convention that made the federal constitution. Few prejudices that one finds there, continual struggle against provincial prejudices. Sincere love of republican liberty, but brave and constant struggle against bad popular passions.

Character of Washington, even more to be admired for the courage with which he fought against popular passions than for what he did for liberty!

The gods depart!

A separate chapter on Washington. Washington has been praised because he did not want to make himself a dictator, because he went back into the crowd.... Ignorance of the true state of affairs, historical memories badly applied. Cincinnatus. Washington could not really have thought of dominating. But *admirable* in his resistance to the excesses of popular opinion. It is in that that his superiority lies; that is the zenith. Washington could not have risen by arms (ridiculous), but by popular favour. And he did not for a moment seek this. Why has Washington, who ended by lacking majority support in his lifetime, become more-than-a-man after his death?

Democracy's Court

THE greatest moral ill resulting from the ascendancy of democracy is that it puts the spirit of a court, and the character of courtiers, within the reach of everyone.

In democratic republics the number of courtiers is immense. The only difference between them and those in monarchies is that they are courtiers with bad taste.

The Americans have only two ways of getting at the truth: the *voice of foreigners* and *experience*.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About Virtue in Republics

The Americans do not form a virtuous people and yet they are free. This is not absolute proof that virtue is not, as Montesquieu thought it was, essential to the existence of republics.

One must not take Montesquieu's idea narrowly. What that great man intended to say was that republics can only be sustained by the action of society on itself. What he means by virtue is the moral power which each individual exercises upon himself, and which prevents him from violating another's right.

When that triumph of man over his temptations . . . is the result of weakness or of a calculation of personal interest, it does not constitute virtue in the eyes of a moralist; but it comes within Montesquieu's idea, for he is talking much more of the effect than of its cause.

In America it is not virtue which is great but temptation which is small. Which comes to the same thing. It is not that disinterestedness is great, but that interest is well understood, which again comes to almost the same. So then Montesquieu was right, although he was speaking of antique virtue, and what he said about the Greeks and Romans is still applicable to the Americans.

There, as with us, the press is a power which one abuses privately and accedes to in public. It is most often nourished on hate and jealousy; it moulds and shapes truth to its requirements. I cannot imagine how it was that such liberty did not turn out to be more vulgar. . . .

Grant me thirty years of equal division of inheritances and a free press, and I will provide you with a Republic.

Democracy and Wisdom

It is not always through weakness and incapacity for action that democracy succumbs.

It is not in the nature of a democratic power to be short of material strength, but it often is short of moral authority, stability, and skill.

I would agree, if the point is put, that democratic governments have more power than others, but less wisdom.

Two ways in which a government can collapse: (1) Lack of power. (2) Poor use of its powers (as with tyranny). It is from the latter defect that the American republics will collapse. The former is quicker than the latter and more striking, but not more certain.

The importance of judicial power as a barrier against democracy, its weakness. In most of the States the judges depend on the legislature for their salary. In several, they are elected by it, or by the people. Increasing causes of tyranny.

In France in order that society may function it is not only necessary that social power be *centralised* but also *stable*. Power can be centralised in an assembly, then it is *strong* but not *stable*. It can be centralised in one man. Then it is less strong but more stable.

Infatuation and inconstancy of the people in the democracies. In 1801 Mr. Burr shared the votes equally with Jefferson; for thirty-six days the balance in the House of Representatives was even; and after that he was out of the picture. Good illustration of the truth that democracies are fallible. Scorn for those who say the opposite. . . .

Despotism occurs under both extremes of sovereignty: when one man rules and when the majority governs. Despotism is a disease inherent in unlimited power, no matter who represents that power.

For democracy to grow, it must have *citizens*, a people who take interest in public affairs. They must have the capacity to participate and to determine. The cardinal point to which one must always return. . . .

Aristocracy—Democracy

IT IS a great mistake to believe that it is possible to find a social state in which all classes of society are equally favoured. When the aristocracy governs, the interest of the poor is always neglected, and that of the rich is always more or less sacrificed when the numerical majority makes the law. The same fault can be found with both systems.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The only difference is that under aristocratic government it is the interest of the greater number that suffers.

You can never sufficiently integrate the interests of rich and poor to be able completely to satisfy both the same government; so one must choose the interest of the greater number.

Every official paid, necessary consequence of universal suffrage and the reign of democracy.

Men are very lucky to have interests, for if they only had opinions and beliefs they would never have a reason to come to a decision (to insert in the chapter on the effects of the freedom of the press).

The Russians

THERE are people who live under despotism, but yet have a strong feeling of nationality, and whom one can see making immense sacrifices to save a fatherland in which they live without share and without rights. But then one must note well it is always religion that takes the place of patriotism for them.

The continuity, the glory, and the welfare of the nation is a religious dogma for them. In defending their country they defend that holy city in which they are all citizens.

The people of Turkey have never taken any part in the direction of the affairs of society; nevertheless, they have accomplished great things because they saw the triumph of the religion of Mahommed in the conquests of the Sultans. Now the religion is going, and they have only despotism left, and they are falling.

The Russian who has not even a share in the land on which he is born is one of the bravest soldiers in Europe, and he burns his crops to ruin the enemy. But it is the holy empire he is defending, and when he dies for his country the heavens open and his reward is ready.

What makes despotic governments formidable is when the people whom they rule are moved by religious enthusiasm. Then the unity of power instead of damaging social cohesion simply directs it. The nations in such condition have the strength of free peoples without the disadvantages of liberty. All their powers are integrated and are directed to the same end.... Their impact is almost irresistible.

Then a strange thing happens. The more harsh and oppressive the government is, the greater the things it achieves. The more unhappy the nation is, the greater efforts it makes to protect a soil that it does not possess. The less men are attached to life, the better they defend it. It is not with this world in view that religious peoples behave like this. And they die the more easily the more wretched they are....

A Share in the World

MONTESQUIEU, in attributing lasting power to despotism, has done it an honour it does not deserve. Despotism is a thing so evil in its nature that on its own sole account it can neither create nor maintain anything. Fear by itself can only serve for a time. When one looks closely at the matter, one sees that what makes absolute governments last and function is religion and not fear; religion, a principle of power of which they make use, but which does not reside at all in them. When a nation while still remaining enslaved ceases to be religious, there is no human means by which it can long be held in bondage.

To sum up: I am profoundly convinced that there is no other lasting force except the coherence of human wills. To use this force for the preservation of societies, men must be given a share in this world, or in the next.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stuart Holroyd

Revolt and Commitment

Thoughts at Twenty-Five

IT IS commonly said of my generation that we are rebels frustrated of a cause. Our rebellious passions are supposed to be exacerbated by the fact that we feel we cannot employ them to any useful or worthwhile purpose, and the popular conception of us envisages a generation of boorish and violent egotists.

To speak of a disenchanted, a lost, or an angry generation is a convenient way of indicating certain mutations of mood in the cultural climate, but it can be misleading if the distinctions between the generations are understood too literally. To-day we are all, young and old, in the same swim, and when all the talk about the different generations has yielded its limited understanding of our predicament we are left with a situation that is of urgency to all and to which there are certain distinct possible human responses.

Probably the one thing that is common to the different generations and the different types of persons involved in the fate of the world to-day, is a sense of the immensity and the complexity of the problems determining that fate. If people of my generation lack a cause into which to canalise their energies it is not because no causes exist but rather because those that do exist are not big enough to measure against the immensity of the total situation. At the end of 1956, after the abortive uprising of the Hungarian people against Russian domination, a well-known British author of the middle generation tried to organise a protest march of young people to the frontiers of Hungary. The plan fell through because people could not answer the *Why?* of it. Protest for the sake of protest is not so popular as it was twenty years ago. What is regarded as political apathy in people of my generation is really a sense of dissociation from any of the trends of events in the world. Political and economic forces move like vast glaciers, with an inhuman and steady progression that man does not understand and that he is impotent to check.

It is the problem of extending into an objective social context certain values which have been subjectively realised and approved. Unless a man can do this, can feel that there is some continuity between his private and his social being, he is likely to retire into an entirely private world, which might be either a world of violent egotistic passions or one of solitary religious experience. In either case he will repudiate responsibility for the society he is living in, and any interest he might take in its political affairs will be more to confirm him in his rebellion than to integrate him with the society.

I CAN only feel integral with society, with nature or with other people when I stand to them in a living and creative relationship. That is, when I can communicate and apply to them my sense of values. I have to have a sense of participating actively and creatively in the living processes that go on in them. Now the situation to-day makes such a participation impossible. The only way I can

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

morally participate in the political life of the world to-day is quite negative. I can deplore and criticise certain acts, and that is as far as I can get in extending my subjective values into a social context. I can negate, but I cannot affirm, and therefore I cannot feel myself to be actively and dynamically involved in the currents of political events in the world.

This is the root cause of the feeling of dissociation from society that many young people feel to-day. In the 'thirties men could still fight for an idea and believe that their action was positive and would make its mark. Ideas and ideals are discredited to-day, however, and consequently the only two coherent political positions are revolt and deliberate commitment to particular and localised causes with no ideological strings attached.

Revolt can be a positive and even a creative thing if it is backed up by a defined system of values. But there is little of this moral revolt in the air to-day. The atmosphere is charged with passions and violence, but they take their origin from experiences of personal frustration and oppression rather than from moral grounds. This is the "whimpering" that marks ours as a society in decay. The mark of a healthy society is that its members are motivated in their participation in its life by other than personal factors, and that it is governed therefore by moral and impersonal considerations and not by the conflict of interest. Unfortunately most of our revolutionaries to-day are not passionate moralists or even astute political critics, but class-conscious reactionaries with an axe to grind. But the biblical proverb is still true: "Where there is no vision the people perish." When a man is obsessed with pushing particular interests, the scope of his vision is naturally narrowed down, and he lacks that comprehensive foresight and that broad and impersonal moral foundation to his thinking that are essential to us to-day if we are not to go whimpering to an inglorious extinction.

IT IS only very recently that I have overcome my early disillusionment and been capable of balanced thought about political matters. In an age less crucial in history than the present I would probably have been even less politically involved, but I was early impressed by Thomas Mann's statement that "In our time the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms," and experience and reflection over the years have more forcibly brought home to me the truth of it. Some years ago I made the following observation in my journal:

> Thomas Mann was right when he said that to-day the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms, but I want to ask: What about the destiny of *men*? Does my own destiny and that of every particular individual lie totally in the political balance? No, it cannot, for we are not only political animals; we do not conduct our existence only in relation to time and the world but also in relation to eternity and transcendence. I am involved, but not *wholly* involved, in the fate of the world and in the destiny of man. I have my own destiny and fate quite apart from these. This is why I can never give myself entirely over to despair, although I am fully aware of the gravity of the world's predicament.

At the time when I wrote this I was inclined to take the attitude that my private destiny was a thing quite apart from my involvement in the world's destiny, and a thing to be cultivated at the expense of all else. I would admit no point where the two met. The feeling of dissociation from society consists in the inability to find any social context, any direction that society endorses and that contributes to its life, for the fulfilment of my personal destiny. But my feeling about the political situation of the world I was living in was something more than one of dissociation. I was violently in revolt against it. And it was negative revolt. I did not involve myself in any efforts to better the situation. I had no sense of responsibility for it. It menaced me, and for that reason I hated it and all the people who had contributed to the creation of it. All I wanted was the peace and quiet to develop and enjoy myself in spite of it. Let those who had created the mess sort it out, but let them not impinge too much upon my liberties in the process. That my life should be exposed to hazard because of their bungling was injustice enough. No

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one could reasonably expect me to take on any responsibility for the situation they had created, nor could anyone blame me for cultivating my private destiny quite without reference to them and their crazy world.

IT WAS not an attitude that was easy to sustain. It is not in the nature of things that a man should pursue his spiritual advancement outside of any social context. A man needs to feel that his life has a temporal and terrestrial meaning as well as an eternal one. But it was the attitude to which all my uncertainty about things at that time committed me. I could be certain only of the values and potentials of my subjectivity, so I took my stand upon them to the exclusion of everything else.

But to-day a man must be blind to ignore the fact that mankind is committed to a common destiny and is threatened as a whole by the consequences of total war. I am in the world and I cannot give back my entrance ticket. Nor can I be neutral. I have to define what I am for and what against. To be neutral is impossible, because neutrality produces its effects and they are deleterious ones. If I stand for survival I must be prepared to work for it, because if we do not work for it we cannot obtain it and if we do not obtain it its contrary, destruction, will supervene. But the way I have to work for it may require that I will make certain sacrifices in my pursuit of my personal destiny. Should I make them?

This vital question was brought home to me by an article which appeared in a Sunday newspaper soon after the Suez and Hungarian crises in 1956, when many people expected the big bang to come. I weighed the issue in a journal entry:

> Yesterday's newspaper carried a headline about America's willingness to equip Britain with her latest developed defence weapons, and also an article on the probable effects of a thermo-nuclear war. In the latter article the use of "will" instead of "would" created a disconcerting effect. "A million will die with the first bomb," they say, and as time passes the contingency gets less and less hypothetical. And when I tell —— that to-day man is at every moment confronted with the possibility of not-being, he says urbanely, "Yes, of course, a thunderbolt may strike us dead or a plague overrun the country." Such a lack of contemporary awareness on the part of a man who is supposed to be one of the leading philosophers in the country shocks me. The British have never really known suffering, they have managed to keep their enemies off their soil, and few of them are capable even of imaginative understanding of what Russia went through in 1917 and Germany in the 1930s. And they don't seem to realise that the future that threatens won't be anything like the past. Half a dozen strategically placed bombs would put an end to this island. And is there any precedent to give us faith in disarmament? Has there ever been a long preparation for war that ended amicably with the opposing sides agreeing to deposit their expensive armaments on the deepest bed of the ocean? To hope for such a thing is to hope for a radical change in human nature. Where are we heading, then? To barbarism? And what of we few who are still conscious, we few who haven't yet lapsed into barbarism or into the apathy that is its inception: what should *we* do? Can we mouth St. Augustine's austere saying: "Why should those who are steadfast in heart grieve to see the falling roof-beams and the dying children?"—we who are young and not yet on our death-beds, as Augustine was when the Vandals occupied Hippo? I myself haven't the kind of religious faith that can sustain such an attitude. What then? Dissociate ourselves from it entirely? look after our own skins and say to hell with a human race that has got itself into such a mess? Maybe that is what we ought to do: see if we can manage to be left behind when it's all over to assist at putting the pieces together again. Or should we WARN? No, it would sound no louder than a pin dropped in the middle of a Wagner opera. But what of classical education? What of logical analysis in philosophy? Just before reading the paper yesterday I was reading Catullus, and the absurdity of learning languages—of learning anything, for that matter, except to be oneself and *be more than oneself*—struck me forcibly. But then the big bang may not come, and if we sever ourselves from our roots in anticipation of it we'll just be substituting a long-term degenerative process for a short-term one.

The situation to-day is much the same as it was in October 1956. Perhaps war is a little less likely to break out, and certainly the patterns of power have changed kaleidoscopically in the meantime, insofar as it concerns the problem of determining one's attitude to the world, the situation is substantially the same. In 1956 I saw two alternative courses of action: to opt out and pursue my personal development or to assume a sort of prophetic office and *warn*. To-day it seems

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to me that to take the former course is impossible in view of the nature of the situation and that to take the latter would be vain, presumptuous, negative, and superfluous (since too many people are doing it already). How, then, am I to act? How relate myself to the present situation of the world? How can I rediscover myself as a political being? How overcome that feeling of dissociation from my environment which hitherto has crippled me for action?

I HAVE said that revolt and commitment to particular causes are the only two coherent political positions to-day. My main reason for this conclusion is that I cannot believe in the principle of commitment to any particular ideology or "party line." It seems to me that the party system in politics is still closely bound up with the class system in which it had its origin, and I attribute my late-awakened interest in political matters to the fact that, unlike most of my contemporaries, I do not have a sense of belonging to any particular class and do not have the interests of any particular section of the community so close to my heart as to be out of focus for my vision.

For this reason I feel closer to the Liberals than to either of the two leading political parties in this country. The policies of Liberalism are not so muddied by the interests of class and capital, but are more clearly determined by a defined philosophical and moral attitude. Both the act of revolt and the act of commitment to a particular cause might (and to my thinking *should*) proceed from a grasp of the moral implications of a situation. In the present situation of the world, I feel that politics that are based upon attitudes and upon interests can only have a harmful effect. Nor is a policy of *laisser faire* good enough. Any policy that is not positive can only help precipitate the crash. But positive policies based upon an inflexible ideology or a dogmatic view of history are equally, if not more, dangerous. If the present time of unrest and chaos is to prove antecedent to some new order, some advance in the structure of human society, that advance will be into a state of society in which moral interests prevail over those of class and capital, and the new order will be one morally grounded upon the principle that co-operation is better than competition. Even though I do not commit myself to supporting any particular "party line" or policy, I cannot remain uncommitted to society once I have grasped this truth. Once I have seen that any advance in society must be a moral advance, it is my responsibility to weigh the moral implications of particular situations and act upon my judgment of what is the right action to take in a situation. This will require me to be sometimes a rebel, sometimes a champion of certain causes. For instance, I might support the cause of World Government or the project of the European Economic Community and rebel against the protectionist policies of the Conservative and Labour Parties and against certain acts such as the Suez War and the holding of nuclear tests. When I have determined my attitude to such situations and policies I am in a very real sense committed to society, and to require any other form of commitment of me, such as party membership, is to ask me to go against the moral attitude that is the basis of all my political thinking and of my existence as a political being.

The difficulty of extending subjective values into a social context, I have said, is the root cause of my sense of dissociation from society. But the distinction I make between the act of making one's subjectivity a value in itself and the act of seeking in one's subjectivity for values that shall be universally valid, is significant here. At the time when I wrote my journal entry about the threats of annihilation and degeneration, I was inclined to assume the attitude which made subjectivity a value in itself. I would have declared myself anti-political, or an anarchist, at that time. But subsequently I have grasped certain values, which are broadly moral and philosophical but which determine nevertheless definite policies and attitudes towards the particular political and economic problems that arise in the world.

Through these I have found my way back

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to a form of political and social existence, to a sense of meaningful participation in the life of my age and my society. I have emerged from the chaos of myself to find the chaos of the world a bewildering thing; but now at least I have the feeling of being significantly in the world and of it, which is the essential prerequisite for any creative activity. I am no longer crippled for action by a sense of the discontinuity between my private and my social being. Though I am not *in* society in the sense of having a secure and comfortable niche cut out for myself, I do feel to be *of* society in the sense of being dynamically related to it and a participant in its life. I see the vast complexity of the problems of our time, and grasp the urgent necessity that we find our way beyond it; but I am no longer content to dodge around the complexity and find a little private haven beyond, but feel on the contrary that I must if necessary sacrifice my chance of reaching a private haven and conscript all my faculties and energies to the task of pursuing a trail through the intricate maze of problems, sustained always by the hope that will, intelligence, pertinacity, and vision—and perhaps a little luck or divine guidance—will eventually carry us through to that haven of peace and perpetual creative activity for society of which the incorrigible idealists among men have always dreamed and dream still.

My Boy Came Home

My boy came home.
The seabreeze still curves through his hair:
His tread still rocks
From fears withstood and his young love of voyage,

The saltbrine spray
Still burns along the bronze bloom of his cheek:
Fruit quickly ripe
In foreign suns savage with haze and flame.

His gaze is weighed
Already with some secret hid from me
And softly veiled—
He stepped into our winter out of spring—

So open burst
This budding forth that almost shy I watched
And forbade mine
His mouth that knew another mouth as kiss.

My arm surrounds
Him who unmoved from me for other worlds
Blossomed and grew—
My one my own endlessly far from me.

Stefan George translated by Stephen Spender

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Geoffrey Gorer

Pride, Shame, and Guilt

Notes on a Montenegrin Memoir

QUITE a number of anthropologists, and a few psycho-analysts who have used anthropological data or themselves experienced non-European cultures (notably Erik Erikson) have classified societies according to the predominance of one or another mechanism of internal or social control, the mechanism by which people regulate their own conduct, and which others can invoke to obviate or to punish conduct which transgresses the norms prevalent in a given society at a given period. These mechanisms fall into three major categories: a sense of sin, a sense of shame or pride, and a sense of guilt.

Ontogenetically, in the life of a human being, these three mechanisms represent a temporal sequence. A sense of sin is the most primitive, probably developing before the achievement of coherent speech. It is an all-or-none affair; either one is overwhelmed with sin, completely worthless, wicked, and unlovable, or one is blissfully innocent, oceanically enveloped in a loving universe. A sense of shame or pride, on the other hand, is based on speech, on the expressed or imagined judgments of identified others; one's self-esteem, one's feeling of being at rights with the world, depends on the esteem of others, of the world. With a sense of guilt we are all, in the Western world, familiar; we introject absolute standards of right and wrong; a part of ourselves sits, as it were, in judgment on our behaviour and even our impulses, and punishes us with feelings of anxiety and guilt if we transgress these internalised imperatives, even though there be no chance of these transgressions becoming known to anyone else. According to orthodox Freudian theory, this sense of guilt, this self-regulating internal conscience, develops after the completion of the Oedipal phase, around the age of six or seven. It seems probable that everybody who has developed a sense of guilt has also passed through the earlier stages, and has at least residual senses of sin, shame, and pride; but it is by no means certain that in those societies which rely predominantly on these latter mechanisms most people also develop a sense of guilt.

This distinction is not merely of academic psychological interest. When we talk about democracy, we habitually mean the types of democracy which have developed in the predominantly Protestant societies on either side of the Northern Atlantic; and these democracies depend for their continuing functioning on the fact that the great majority of their citizens have a lively sense of guilt, so that they will supervise their own conduct in the light of categorical imperatives, and will not give way to the temptations inherent in any position of power, influence, or prestige. People can be trusted to function properly without continuous supervision from others, because they supervise themselves. Bureaucracy, whether of government or business, works adequately and fairly because of these internalised controls in the great majority of their members. In the absence of these inter-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nalised controls as the major self-regulating mechanism, it is, to say the least, uncertain whether the spirit of a modern democracy can survive, even though the forms can be readily exported and imported.

It can, indeed, be argued that the ways in which any society can be organised in a relatively permanent fashion are dependent on the mechanisms of internal control which are most prevalent among the members of that society. But when I have advanced this hypothesis to audiences in Britain or America who have a sense of guilt, I have always been conscious of a failure to communicate to them what is implied by "shame" or "pride" as a predominant mechanism. With us, these feelings have, comparatively, little strength. There are enclaves, such as the public schools, or the traditional armed services, where these mechanisms are more frequently evoked, and counter-mores groups, criminals or fascists, who suppress from consciousness the feelings of guilt. But for the vast majority shame and pride are fairly intermittent painful or pleasant feelings, not the motives by which we would build our lives; and it is, apparently, very difficult to imagine that members of other societies feel very differently.

Incidentally, there is much less difficulty in communicating what is implied in a sense of sin. Even though, among Protestants, "sin" is most frequently used to signify guilt in an ecclesiastic setting, the great 19th-century Russian novelists are well known, and their descriptions of a sense of sin convincing. The only society which has been investigated which used a sense of sin as a major mechanism of social control was the traditional peasant society of Czarist Great Russia.

Pride and shame have had no Tolstoy, no Dostoievsky. When I have been asked to recommend books which would give a feeling of what was meant by a "shame culture" or a "pride culture," my choice has so far been limited either to ethnographic monographs, which tend to lack the literary graces that can command belief, or else to the classical Chinese novels, such as *Golden Lotus* or *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which are so exotic in detail, and so distant in time and place, that they too fail to carry conviction. But this gap is now filled, at least as far as a "pride culture" is concerned, by Milovan Djilas' quite remarkable autobiography, *Land Without Justice* (Methuen, 1958), with its vivid account of traditional Montenegrin life.

Djilas' book has a number of merits apart from the aspects I am dealing with here. It is beautifully written, and one can believe that the anonymous translator has, as William Jovanovich says in the preface, caught Djilas' evocative poetic style. It throws considerable illumination on the historical development of Yugoslavia in the years covered by the story, 1911–1928; and the other writings and present fate of the author make it an important political document. But these aspects are not my concern now; I want to try to isolate those features of traditional Montenegrin society into which Djilas was born and in which he spent the first ten years of his life and which seem to me to convey, more vividly than any book I have ever read, what is implied in being a member of a "pride" culture.

MONTENEGRO is a desolate, barren, mountainous country in which the first towns were built in the second half of the 19th century. Through most of modern times it was vaguely under Turkish suzerainty, the frontier where Christian and Moslem met and massacred one another, for a few decades an independent kingdom. It had no exploited natural resources; the sparse population subsisted on a very primitive level of agriculture and herding, supplemented by loot and booty. A money economy, apparently, started operating in the last quarter of the 19th century, and literacy in the twentieth. Djilas tells us that his mother learned to read in 1940, at the age of sixty. The only art which was at all developed was that of the folk bard, the *guslar*. "This land may not be good for living, but it is fine for telling tales."

When Djilas was a schoolboy, around 1921, the old bards, the *guslars*, were already a rarity, though there was one old man in the same townlet as the school.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Listening to his songs, I, like others, lived with the deeds of folk epic and tales. I was intoxicated most of all by the feeling that I, too, was a part of that great narrative, which shone through the living present, the past, and the future of nations. There was something austere and exalted in the often monotonous repetition of images and phrases in the *guslar*'s chant. Again and again, he depicted the trials and misfortunes through which we must live as a people, and showed us how to become men—to sing, to make merry, to keen, to create, to invent, to produce, and, above all, to guard our honour and our good name.

In this short quotation are summarised many of the themes which characterise a culture built on pride, such as that of Montenegro. First, perhaps, is the idiosyncratic attitude to *time*, the constant awareness of oneself as a link between the remembered past and the expected future, with *renown*, public speech or song, as the bridge which alone can link past, present, and future. Next is the emphasis on the *proper way of acting*—no deed is intrinsically good or bad in itself (this is the most obvious contrast with the categorical imperatives of a culture founded on a sense of guilt). It is how the deed is done, to whom, and under what circumstances, which determine whether it is a subsequent source of *pride* or *shame*. Finally, in the list of the qualities which make for a proper man, there is a complete absence of what we should consider moral or civic virtues; the man is not enjoined to be righteous or just or charitable, to prosper or to be a good citizen; he should do well those things that a man must do in public, and, above all, guard his *honour* and his *good name*.

In Montenegro this meant murder, of the right man in the right place in the right fashion. Not only were Christians (in any religious sense of the word, this is a misnomer; practice of the Orthodox faith was nearly non-existent) and Moslems constantly killing one another in ambush and small affrays; Christians, organised into patrilineal clans and tribes, carried on perpetual blood-feuds with their hereditary enemies.

> The word "blood" meant something different in the language I learned in childhood from what it means to-day, especially the blood of one's clan and tribe. It meant the life we lived, a life that flowed from generations of forebears who still lived in the tales handed down. Their blood coursed in all the members of the clan, and in us, too. Someone had now spilled that eternal blood, and it had to be avenged if we wished to keep from drowning in shame before the other clans. Such a yearning has no limits in space, no end in time. . . .
>
> Vengeance—this is a breath of life one shares from the cradle with one's fellow clansmen, in both good fortune and bad, vengeance from eternity. Vengeance was the debt we paid for the love and sacrifice our forebears and fellow clansmen bore for us. It was the defence of our honour and good name and the guarantee of our maidens. It was our pride before others; our blood was not water that one could spill. It was, moreover, our pastures and springs—more beautiful than anyone else's—our family feasts and births. . . .
>
> Vengeance is not hatred, but the wildest and sweetest kind of drunkenness, both for those who must wreak vengeance and for those who wish to be avenged. . . .
>
> The story of any Montenegrin family is made up of traditions about the lives of ancestors who distinguished themselves in some special way, most frequently through heroism. These traditions, spiritually so close to one another, reach back into the remote past, to the legendary founders of clan and tribe. And since there are no unheroic tribes and clans, particularly in the eyes of their members, there is no family without its renowned heroes and leaders. . . .
>
> My forebears were drummed into my head from earliest childhood, as was the case with all my countrymen. I can recite ten generations without knowing anything in particular about them. In that long line I am but a link, inserted only that I might form another to preserve the continuity of the family, the people, and the human race. Otherwise the earth would be an unpeopled desert with none to tell of it. . . .

WHERE this concept of pride differs from the traditional aristocratic pattern of feudal Europe is that there is no division of the population into exhibitors and spectators, the knights and barons exhibiting their prowess, the common people observing and applauding. Here every male permanently holds both rôles. Every man may hope to be a hero, and he will be part of the consensus which will determine the heroic status of his fellows.

Moreover, your own heroism is to a considerable extent determined by the heroism of your enemy. It is here, perhaps more than

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in any other situation, that the contrast between the culture of pride and the culture of guilt is thrown into greatest emphasis. If we are to fight to kill, we must be filled with righteous anger, must feel assured that our enemy is so wicked and base that he has forfeited all human rights. It is impractical to love our enemies, impossible to admire them. But for the Montenegrins, as for some of the American Indians of the Great Plains, the best enemy was he whom one could admire with one's whole heart. Of an incident which occurred when he was seven, Djilas writes:

> It was little wonder that we children mourned for Iso Boljetini. Father mourned him too, though he was proud that his group had felled him. It was a special kind of sorrow, admiration rather, for a fearless hero of wild Albania who had fought to the end on a bare field and an empty road, neither begging nor forgiving, upright and without protection. There was this admiration in our sorrow, too. If one has to die, it would be good to fall like Iso Boljetini. Let it be remembered, at least by those who have seen and heard it.

Father Djilas took Boljetini's large Mauser, with its silver-mounted handle, and kept it as his most precious souvenir. It was the boast of the Montenegrin men that they got all their arms from their fallen enemies; but this was not so much for use as for reverence.

Boljetini is not the only enemy who was praised while Djilas was a small boy, and whose memory is celebrated in these pages. "The greatest heroism was shown by the Moslem Huso Mehotin, a renowned freebooter against the Montenegrins."

Only with a noble enemy can one attain true heroism oneself. If the enemy has not made a good death, one has not oneself made a good name. The blood-feuds were carried on with treachery, deceit, and trickery (there are horrifying stories in the early sections of the book), but though these gratify revenge, they did not constitute heroism: they were not talked about. For Montenegrins "something becomes not only great but remarkable only if it is sung about and praised."

SILENCE is the sanction applied to deeds done in the wrong way, at the wrong time, or to the wrong person; and in bitter silence are preserved the unwitnessed shames one has suffered.

When the Moslem Sandjak was being looted by the Christians, Uncle Mirko

> forced a Moslem child to squeeze through the bent bars of the window of a mosque and to hand him the carpets. This was charged to Uncle as a great sin and shame, like desecrating a church, and we never talked about it in our house.

When Djilas was three years old,

> in honour of something, a cannon was to be fired. Everyone made a terrible face and stopped their ears as though something dangerous was going to fly into them. Father's orderly buried my head between his legs, and I stopped my ears myself. Why did he bury my head in so shameful a spot? I was ashamed because of this but I was afraid to pull away my head. I never told anyone about my shame, nor about the spot where my head had been buried.

Chronologically, this is the second clear memory of his life which Djilas recounts. The first memory is less unusual:

> A boy had locked a door from the inside and found himself stuck between the wall and the bed. Through the window, from the stairs, they promise him everything and beg him to open the door. He is no longer a little boy, they tell him, he is two years old. He comprehends. He would like to do this great deed, but he cannot get loose.

This first incident, the appeal to the little boy's pride in his growth, might have occurred in any society, though I should think it would not often be so vividly remembered; but consider the training which the little boy of three must have undergone to have felt the shame which is recounted in the incident of the cannon! Although Djilas does not detail this, it seems as though, as in traditional peasant Poland, the body is divided from birth into noble and shameful parts, in Poland the head being the noblest and the feet the most shameful.

The early training was extremely severe and consistent.

> And Mother beats us. If she cannot catch us during the day, she beats us when we are asleep. The switch cuts into the flesh and one sleeps on. And when we awaken, she demands our promise that we will never again do what we did. Or else the beating is continued.
>
> It would be easy to promise that we would

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> not do what we did if only we could feel truly guilty for what we did. But since we do not feel guilty it is better to lose some sleep and endure the beating to the end.

It is not clear from the narrative whether this harsh beating of the little boys—Milovan must have been five or six, his brother a year or so older—was intended to make them yield, or to harden their wills, as though one were tempering hot iron, and the good mother's success was shown by her children not yielding to her. My impression is that the latter was the true aim: a boy-child must be made spiritually proud and unyielding as soon as possible. I also get the impression that no allowances were made for boys past infancy because of their youth: some feats are beyond their present strength and skill; but they should think and feel and command themselves like men. When Djilas was five (in 1916), one of the conquering Austrians

> told Father that he was under orders to escort him to the command post at Kolašin, supposedly to give some information. All of us at home already suspected, knew, that Father would not return. But nobody cried. Our pain was cold and full of hatred and scorn.

This tempering of the will produced a strong, shining, but very brittle character. While their pride was untarnished, the Montenegrins were, most of them most of the time, noble, generous, and manly; but if their pride were broken they were without self-respect or self-restraint, without justice and without mercy. Everybody, it must be repeated, had a just source of pride:

> Just as every family in the village was proud of something, so every camp in the mountain was proud if its bull lorded it over the others, or if its lads could heave stones further or outleap the lads of other clans. Good householders as they were, my uncles valued their good cattle as much as their own good name.

There was a drought and famine in the country:

> Fear of starvation is frequently stronger with those who have something than with those who do not. Those who have, talk about how they have nothing. The others keep proudly silent and endure, as though they had some other great wealth, but wealth that cannot be eaten. . . .

This proud society was destroyed as a society when Montenegro was conquered by the Austrians and Bulgarians in 1915.

> A whole people—the Montenegrins—which understood life in terms of war and glory, stopped fighting. A people's army and state had ceased to be.
>
> The fall of the Montenegrin state did not blunt the force of heroism and of manhood, and it seemed to sharpen others—forces of violence, untamed and unrestrained. . . . Men became bad, rotten, unwilling to give one another air to breathe. Bestiality and scandal at home, in the village, quickly crowded out of our minds the national tragedy. These vices were our own, Montenegrin and domestic.

It was not, it must be emphasised, the defeat which produced these vices and violence, it was having survived the defeat.

> The grandeur of the holocaust of Mojkovac was not in victory, for there was none. The enemy was simply stopped, while the state dissolved at the same time. The grandeur of this battle lay in the expression of an undying and inexplicable heroism and sacrifice, which held that it was easier to die than to submit to shame —for in death there is neither defeat nor shame.

After the end of the war, a representative of the new state of Yugoslavia destroyed two rebel clans by making them survive shame.

> Picking about forty of the arrested men . . . he had this group taken separately to the schoolhouse and beat them, one by one, with his fists and boots, cuffing them and pulling their noses and whiskers. . . . The whole clan had been humbled, crushed. Boško then called them all to a meeting and established order and obedience. . . .
>
> The Rovčani were treated with cruelty and insult. Their houses were burned down; they were pillaged and beaten. The women had cats sewn in their skirts and the cats were beaten with rods. The soldiers mounted astride the backs of old men and forced them to carry them across the stream. Property and honour and the past—all these were trampled on.

This last quotation recalls a similar tale from Oceania, where the men were forced to stand under a bridge, while the women walked over the bridge, *over their heads*. This was so profoundly humiliating that the men refused to produce further children, and the tribe died out.

Nations, clans, and individuals can be destroyed through shame, turned into vicious thieves and murderers, or reduced to docile robots, or to complete despair.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mihailo was thrown in jail and beaten. From that time on, he began to withdraw from Communism and into himself, out of shame that he had been beaten. Everyone noticed and laughed.

Mihailo was Milovan Djilas' godfather. He had converted his godson to Communism when the boy was seven years old.

IT IS extraordinary that Djilas should be able to give so detailed a picture of a society which stopped its full functioning before he was ten years old, and in which he only participated very intermittently after that age. At ten he was sent to live with relations in the small town of Kolašin to attend an elementary school, and then three years later to the larger town of Berane to high school. It is perhaps because this proud life practically stopped at the same time as he was sent away that it has remained so complete in his memory.

Another possible reason for this remarkably complete picture, is that the life and values of the Montenegrin male seem to have been extraordinarily simple and uncomplicated, so that there was little which a ten-year-old boy could not learn. He might not yet have developed the strength and skill necessary for the simple agriculture, hunting, herding, warfare, building; but there was practically nothing he could not understand. Some men might develop special gifts—Djilas' grandfather was a healer, Djilas himself was a poet, would, surely, have been a *guslar*—but the way of a man was uncomplicated, devoted to the single aim of good repute.

The one male relationship which Djilas was too young to participate in, and whose rôle he consequently fails to make entirely clear, is "blood brotherhood," the ceremonial bond between two otherwise unrelated men. For Djilas this is the purest love of all, even purer than the love between brother and sister. In his schooldays he comes across such a pair:

They were more than real brothers. Because of this kind of love, which had been a more frequent thing in earlier times, everyone held them in high regard and esteem, despite the fact that they were not particularly pleasant fellows. They were like a remnant of something long past and distant, a folk song that still walked the earth.

Somewhat uncommonly for a society in this stage of technical development, the rôles of women seem to have been more complicated and various than were those of men. They apparently had an almost exclusive concern with the economy, with petty trading and techniques of production, which they had to carry on unaided. As a young boy, Djilas contrasts the behaviour of his own male kin with that of the Serbians, the Metešani, who "did not beat their wives, or at least they did so only rarely. With them, a man did not regard it as shameful to take a woman's place in any task."

Kinship dictated the way women should behave to any related male; before marriage they lived in a life of strict rules which decreed that, with unrelated males "they can dance and joke in public but must be virtuous and unapproachable in private." They were allowed to be tender only with their brothers, and, in a different way, with their grandchildren.

Montenegrin women love their brothers—even their cousins if they have no brothers—with a love that combines a feminine feeling at its purest and subtlest with a primæval determination to preserve the breed from which one has sprung. That tongue of stone and fire which knows no words of endearment becomes transformed in the mouth of a sister into an incredible softness and cooing. A sister is not something greater than a mother, or less—but different. She has a more direct and irrational warmth in her love for her brother. A sister will quarrel with her brother, but she will never break with him. She does not share with him in the property. The family has no obligations towards her, or she towards it. She simply gives and accepts love and goodness.

Although she treats some cousins as brothers, and in the absence of appropriate males may even occasionally perform an heroic deed in the blood feud—for other cousins the Montenegrin girl was, before either were married, available as a partner in sexual games and explorations. Djilas does not make clear how these cousinly rôles are differentiated, whether by the type of connecting relations, or by the distance from a common ancestor. A similar distinction is reported for the men who live in the hills of the Southern United States, where female

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cousins are classified as "kissin' cousins" and "crackin' cousins."

IN MARRIAGE there seems to have been extremely little tenderness, with the stick in the hands of the husband and the "tongue of stone and fire" in the mouth of the wife. Even when love was felt, it could not be demonstrated. Djilas recounts that when his father returned from being a prisoner of war "Mother, to hide her tears—for it was not becoming for a woman to show before others too much happiness at her husband's coming—ran out, into the woods." For shame, too, she has to bear her children outside the house; and I have already described how severe she has to be as a mother.

If she bears sons, and they too have sons, she comes into her own.

> Grandmother was one of those Montenegrin women whom no calamity or catastrophe could keep from fulfilling the purpose her life was meant to fulfil—to breed male heirs and preserve from ruin the house into which she had come.... Without such women, and they were all like that, this people would not even exist.

If she only bears daughters, or is sterile, her life is completely miserable.

Djilas' grandmother was a "wise woman," in contact with the frightening, non-Christian, supernatural world of evil spirits, witches, and vampires. She was also able to call for supernatural help on the soul of a drowned man which "was wandering over the earth, unshriven but just, seeking peace." I know of no other instance of this belief.

Montenegrin women, it would appear, can cause embarrassment, and even shame, to their menfolk if they misbehave, but they cannot destroy their pride or their honour. Indeed the surname of Djilas, which means "a jumper" comes from an over-frisky widow among the paternal ancestry.

> This irrepressible widow was named Djisna and her sons were named after her. At first they were angry, and blood was shed over that nickname, but none the less it held, as in the case of so many others. My grandfather Aleksa finally accepted the surname as his own. He could afford to do so because he was so renowned that his heroism denied any shame.

The fact that a man's honour could not be destroyed by his women-folk's misbehaviour, put the Montenegrins into a stronger position than that of the traditional Greek peasants, whose honour, it may be rather coarsely said, was kept between the legs of their women-folk, particularly their sisters. Because their pride, their *filotimo*, is not in their own control, Greek men are, or were, far more vulnerable than the Montenegrins.

I HAVE not treated this account of a vanished society of murderous mountaineers in such detail purely because of its intrinsic interest. It offers, I hope, a vivid paradigm of the psychological predispositions current, in one variation or another, in a great part of what are called "the uncommitted nations," above all in the lands bordering the Eastern Mediterranean which were formerly under Turkish suzerainty, and the lands of further Asia which were or are under Chinese suzerainty or influence. In much of this world a concern for renown, the hope of heroic stature, and a duty to wipe out the shames of past history have far greater strength than the desire for prosperity and justice which we tend to consider the main motives which should govern the behaviour of politician and citizen alike. If our negotiators could develop some feeling for the great sensitivity of these people's pride, where an insulting phrase can outweigh millions of dollars of aid and scores of years of good administration; where the past is never really dead until old scores have been paid and past humiliations wiped clean—not necessarily with blood, but at least with words "as soft as feathers on a wound": then much of the hostility and resentment which so needlessly bedevil our relationships with these people and governments could be avoided. As human animals, all men everywhere have the same basic needs; but as members of society they differ greatly in the value they put on different goals. If we can accord the respect to pride and shame that we demand for conscience, the world will be an easier, and a safer, place to live in.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART

On the Uses of Art Books

By Harold Rosenberg

THE world of art keeps expanding, and with it the art world. Each year more art is dug out of different times and places, additional segments of society discover in art pleasures not unrelated to the picture stories and treasures of childhood.

The blossoming of art books in the shop windows and stalls is an effect of this double increase. The first use of the art book is in catching up with "new" art by the professional and student, with a new field by an awakened public.

The art in an art book is a collection of substitute images. As "objects" these are, of course, less than satisfactory: the picture plates lack the scale, materiality, surface, ageing, environment, etc., of their originals—their colour, even at the very best, is (inevitably) off.

But is it as a poor substitute that the public of the art book accepts the work in it? Or are the contents of the "imaginary museum" of books and reproductions more to its taste than actual paintings and sculptures?

In addition to dispensing with the time, cost, and fatigue involved in tracking down individual creations, art-book art has one overwhelming advantage over the artist's product: *It appears in a context of knowledge.*

A book on Piranesi or Matisse, on Zen washes or Szechwan reliefs, "covers" its subject or a defined portion of it. Through it you have not only "seen" Piranesi, you have "placed" him, once for all. Aided by text, chronology, bibliography, lists of major works, you know more; perhaps more important, you know what you know.

It seems to me that the current vogue of art books arises from an appetite for knowledge which the book is better suited to satisfy than are art works themselves. It coincides with the emergence of art as a branch of learning and as a source of data for other branches of learning. Images in paint, metal, stone, have been made objects of investigation by historians, anthropologists, psychiatrists. He who has learned how to *read* a work of art will find in it valuable matter about individuals and societies.

This is another way of saying that art has become part of "language"; it is a writing of sorts; and there is a growing difficulty in detaching the work from meanings of this order. A painting now seems to *belong* in a book, instead of being left in its hiding-place on a ceiling or in the gloom of a cathedral.

PRESSED for disclosures by the social and historical sciences, art has also become a question to itself. The interrogation of painting by painters which has been the major force of creation in our epoch has brought forth a succession of enigmas—and this, too, has served to enlarge the rôle of the art book. One could appreciate, or believe he could, a nude of Couture or a scene of Veronese without the aid of a commentary. In the modern painting, echoes of the response of painting to the artist's demand that it assert its premisses resound between the frames. Confronted by the canvas, one awaits the deciphering of the text.

Thus no exhibition is complete without its catalogue in which "statements by the artist" are increasingly featured. Important shows tend more and more to take on the character of art books, presenting wall-scale duplicates of the publications that will result from them.

Doubling as museum director and author, the art historian has turned the actual museum into an "imaginary museum" where the paintings themselves function as illustrations to bring out the critical or cultural concept: the "periods" of Cézanne or Brancusi, The Nude Through The Ages, Abstraction And Nature, Eurasians Under Thirty. In the "retrospective" show or the show built around a theme, the painting

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appears as an enlargement of its own reproduction, like the blow-up of a fingerprint; once the show has been dispersed only the picture in the catalogue will remain as the visual representation of the meaning of the work.

The liberation from "literary subject matter" boasted of by modern painting and sculpture has been accomplished by their transformation into literature. With images of genre and fable eliminated, the painting as a whole has become a *word*: one wants to know what the work "says."

For clues the public turns to the "personality" of the artist and devours biographies and novels and film romances of artists' lives as seasoning for its monographs and "studies." Insecure in the face of art's mysteries the audience appeals to their human source—and is told by the artist to go back and stand in front of the canvas.

But while the painting is supposed to speak, it has become nothing else than what is said about it. In a painting of Pollock or Still, "criticism" is ground in with the pigments. This coalescence of art and comment is exemplified by the art book, in which the artist and the historian-critic compete for the last word.

As the painting is swallowed up in interpretations of it, the disparity between its physical reality and its published image vanishes or, as we have indicated, the advantage comes to lie with the latter. The actual work becomes at length simply the mould from which handier copies have been made: its fate is either to serve the various uses of the museum or to be collected as a relic of the artist's person, like a handwritten manuscript or letter.

BY EXTENDING its influences beyond the material environment of the work, that is, by setting itself afloat as "culture," art has succeeded in achieving value with a public unable to prize it as a possession.

In America the interest in painting, especially since the war, enormously exceeds the buying of it. The market is for Art, not for works of art —even among the collectors one suspects that any work by So-and-So will do.

This generalised interest feeds on anything—as the Directors of the Museum of Modern Art have demonstrated with the successful marketing of their membership "package," which for a single fee supplies admission to exhibition openings (the second opening; the first is for invited guests), tickets to film showings, service in the terrace, cafeteria, discounts on art books.

In addition to being a thing to learn, art has become something to do; and the art book is one means by which the individual work is rescued from its corner and brought into the programme.

THE art book, then, is a phenomenon of the modern conversion of art into an aspect of intellectual culture open to all, rather than, as formerly, of the taste-cultivation of an élite or an implement of ritual.

It is easy to condemn the predominance of art books over art works as typical of the breakdown of "organic" experience in our mass civilisation and its replacement by knowledge or even by a mere illusion of it. It is equally easy to acclaim the spread of art publications as a sign of mounting public understanding and the means of a general elevation of taste.

Both these interpretations seem somewhat beside the point. The fact is that art's relation with society has been changed and thereby the character of art itself, past and present.

Given the new reality of art as a document, it is futile to apply the standard of an aristocratic contemplation untroubled by the questioning mind. On the other hand, wider knowledge of art is no evidence that art is taking on a larger part in contemporary life, since experience of art can only come from looking at works and this, leading to engrossment in the particular, has more to do with ignorance than with knowledge.

For a sound art education we need to augment our knowledge through art books and develop our ignorance through works of art.

Such an education can, however, hardly become universal, given the present extreme shortage of paintings and sculptures in relation to the tremendously enlarged requirements of democratic society. In the United States, for example, despite impressive institutional advances since the 'thirties, there are still cities, including university centres, where not a single representative painting of this century is on permanent public display—overflowing art classes are compelled to rely entirely for objects of study on the library and file of slides.

In part the shortage of art works is owing to poor distribution—good paintings have no market until they are singled out by the masterpiece cult of the popular media and the museums. But if all the paintings mouldering in cellars and studios or being destroyed through re-use of their canvas were put where people could see them, there would still not be enough to go around.

In any case, to restore the balance between the work of art and the creations of the printing presses, immeasurably more paintings and sculptures are needed—and this means, more artists. Perhaps they are on their way through do-it-yourself, though this also results in more art books.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Calm Even in the Catastrophe

By W. H. Auden

THE publishers, printers, translators, editors, and everyone else responsible for *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh** are to be congratulated upon as beautiful a book as has appeared for some time. But when so much trouble and money have been spent to secure perfection in every detail, I find it extraordinary that two obvious needs of the reader should have been overlooked. A collection of letters is not like a novel which can only be read chapter by chapter from the beginning to end; it is more like an anthology of lyrics to which one returns now for this poem and now for that. On opening it at any page, therefore, the reader wants to know the date and place of the letter before him, but in this edition he is left ignorant. Then—this seems to be a universal oversight of editors—when a book is published in three heavy volumes, nothing is more annoying and time-wasting than to find, when one wishes to look up a particular reference, that the only index is at the end of the last volume. Surely, in an undertaking as luxurious as this, to provide an index to each volume would have added very little to the cost and contributed enormously to the reader's comfort

The greater part of the collection is taken up, of course, with Van Gogh's letters to his brother between 1872, when Vincent was nineteen and Theo fifteen, and 1890, when he died. The editors have very sensibly interspersed this correspondence with personal reminiscences of Van Gogh by people who knew him in the various places from which he was writing.

The Theo letters are followed by letters to Amice Rappard, a few to his youngest sister Wilhelmina, a batch to the poet-painter Emile Bernard, and, at the end, come the few letters of Theo to Vincent which have survived.

The great masters of letter-writing as an art have probably been more concerned with entertaining their friends than disclosing their innermost thoughts and feelings; their epistolary style is characterised by speed, high spirits, wit, and fantasy. Van Gogh's letters are not art in this sense, but human documents; what makes them great letters is the absolute self-honesty and nobility of the writer.

The 19th century created the myth of the Artist as Hero, the man who sacrifices his health and happiness to his art and in compensation claims exemption from all social responsibilities and norms of behaviour.

At first sight Van Gogh seems to fit the myth exactly. He dresses and lives like a tramp, he expects to be supported by others, he works at his painting like a fiend, he goes mad. Yet the more one reads these letters, the less like the myth he becomes.

He knows he is neurotic and difficult but he does not regard this as a sign of superiority, but as an illness like heart disease, and hopes that the great painters of the future will be as healthy as the Old Masters.

> But this painter who is to come—I can't imagine him living in little cafés, working away with a lot of false teeth, and going to the Zouaves' brothels, as I do.

He sees the age in which he is living as one of transition rather than fulfilment, and is extremely modest about his own achievements.

> Giotto and Cimabue, as well as Holbein and Van Dyck, lived in an obeliscal solidly-framed society, architecturally constructed, in which each individual was a stone and all the stones clung together, forming a monumental society.... But, you know, we are in the midst of downright *laisser-aller* and anarchy. We artists who love order and symmetry isolate ourselves and are working to define *only one thing*.... We *can* paint an atom of the chaos, a horse, a portrait, your grandmother, apples, a landscape....
>
> We do not feel that we are dying, but we do feel the truth that we are of small account, and that we are paying a hard price to be a link in the chain of artists, in health, in youth, in liberty, none of which we enjoy, any more than the cab-horse that hauls a coachful of people out to enjoy the spring.

Furthermore, though he never wavers in his belief that painting is his vocation, he does not claim that painters are superior to other folk.

> It was Richepin who said somewhere,
>
> *L'amour de l'art fait perdre l'amour vrai.*
>
> I think that is terribly true, but on the other hand real love makes you disgusted with art....
>
> The rather superstitious ideas they have here about painting sometimes depress me more than

* *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh.* Thames & Hudson. 3 vols. 15 gns. the set.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I can tell you, because basically it is really fairly true that a painter as a man is too absorbed in what his eyes see, and is not sufficiently master of the rest of his life.

It is true that Van Gogh did not earn his living but was supported all his life by his brother who was by no means a rich man. But when one compares his attitude towards money with that of say, Wagner, or Baudelaire, how immeasurably more decent and self-respecting Van Gogh appears.

No artist ever asked less of a patron—a labourer's standard of living and enough over to buy paints and canvases. He even worries about his right to the paints and wonders whether he ought not to stick to the cheaper medium of drawing. When, occasionally, he gets angry with his brother, his complaint is not that Theo is stingy but that he is cold; it is more intimacy he craves for, not more cash.

> ... against my person, my manners, clothes, world, you, like so many others, seem to think it necessary to raise so many objections—weighty enough and at the same time obviously without redress—that they have caused our personal brotherly intercourse to wither and die off gradually in the course of the years.
>
> This is the dark side of your character—I think you are mean in this respect—but the bright side is your reliability in money matters.
>
> Ergo conclusion—I acknowledge being under an obligation to you with the greatest pleasure. Only—lacking relations with you, with Teersteg, and with whomever I knew in the past—I want *something else*....
>
> There are people, as you know, who support painters during the time when they do not yet earn anything. But how often doesn't it happen that it ends miserably, wretchedly for both parties, partly because the protector is annoyed about the money, which is or at least seems quite thrown away, whereas, on the other hand, the painter feels entitled to more confidence, more patience and interest than is given him? But in most cases the misunderstandings arise from carelessness on both sides.

Few painters read books and fewer can express in words what they are up to. Van Gogh is a notable exception: he read voraciously and with understanding, he had considerable literary talent of his own, and he loved to talk about what he was doing and why. If I understand the meaning of the word *literary* as a pejorative adjective when applied to painting, those who use it are asserting that the world of pictures and the world of phenomenal nature are totally distinct so that one must never be judged by reference to the other. To ask if a picture is "like" any natural object—it makes no difference whether one means a "photographic" or a platonically "real" likeness—or to ask if one "subject" for a picture is humanly more important than another, is irrelevant. The painter creates his own pictorial world and the value of a painting can only be assessed by comparison with other paintings. If that is indeed what critics mean, then Van Gogh must be classified as a literary painter. Like Millet, whom all his life he acknowledged as his master, and like some of his contemporary French novelists, Flaubert, the Goncourts, Zola, he believed that the truly human subject for art in his day was the life of the poor. Hence his quarrel with the art-schools.

> As far as I know there isn't a single academy where one learns to draw and paint a digger, a sower, a woman putting the kettle over the fire or a seamstress. But in every city of some importance there is an academy with a choice of models for historical, Arabic, Louis XV, in short, *all really* non-existent figures.... All academic figures are put together in the same way and, let's say, *on ne peut mieux*. Irreproachable, *faultless*. You will guess what I am driving at, they do not reveal anything new. I think that, however correctly academic a figure may be, it will be superfluous, though it were by Ingres himself, when it lacks the essential modern note, the intimate character, the real *action*. Perhaps you will ask: When will a figure not be superfluous? ... When the digger digs, when the peasant is a peasant and the peasant woman a peasant woman.... I ask you, do you know a single digger, a single sower in the old Dutch school? Did they ever try to paint "a labourer"? Did Velasquez try it in his water-carrier or types from the people? No. The figures in the pictures of the old master do not *work*.

It was this same moral preference for the naturally real to the ideally beautiful which led him, during his brief stay at an art-school in Antwerp, when he was set to copy a cast of the Venus de Milo, to make alterations in her figure and roar at the shocked professor: "So you don't know what a young woman is like, God damn you! A woman must have hips and buttocks and a pelvis in which she can hold a child."

Where he differs from most of his French contemporaries is that he never shared their belief that the artist should suppress his own emotions and view his material with clinical detachment. On the contrary, he writes:

> ... whoever wants to do figures must first have what is printed on the Christmas number of *Punch*: "Good Will to all"—and this to a high degree. One must have a warm sympathy with human beings, and go on having it, or the drawings will remain cold and insipid. I consider it very necessary for us to watch ourselves and to take care that we do not become disenchanted in this respect.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and how opposed to any doctrine of "pure" art is this remark written only two months before his death.

> Instead of grandiose exhibitions, it would have been better to address oneself to the people and work so that each could have in his home some pictures or reproductions which would be lessons, like the work of Millet.

Here he sounds like Tolstoy, just as he sounds like Dostoievsky when he says:

> It always strikes me, and it is very peculiar, that whenever we see the image of indescribable and unutterable desolation—of loneliness, poverty and misery, the end and extreme of all things, the thought of God comes into one's mind.

When he talks of the poor, indeed, Van Gogh sounds more honest and natural than either Tolstoy or Dostoievsky. As a physical and intellectual human being Tolstoy was a king, a superior person; in addition he was a count, a socially superior person. However hard he tried, he could never think of a peasant as an equal; he could only, partly out of a sense of guilt at his own moral shortcomings, admire him as his superior. Dostoievsky was not an aristocrat and he was ugly, but it was with the criminal poor rather than the poor as such that he felt in sympathy. But Van Gogh preferred the life and company of the poor, not in theory but in fact. Tolstoy and Dostoievsky were, as writers, successful in their lifetime with the educated; what the peasants thought of them as men we do not know. Van Gogh was not recognised as an artist in his lifetime; on the other hand, we have records of the personal impression he made upon the coal-miners of the Borinage.

> People still talk of the miner whom he went to see after the accident in the Marcasse mine. The man was a habitual drinker, "an unbeliever and blasphemer," according to the people who told me the story. When Vincent entered his house to help and comfort him, he was received with a volley of abuse. He was called especially a *mâcheux d'capelots* (rosary chewer) as if he had been a Roman Catholic priest. But Van Gogh's evangelical tenderness converted the man.... People still tell how, at the time of the *tirage*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> *au sort*, the drawing of lots for conscription, women begged the holy man to show them a passage in the Holy Scripture which would serve as a talisman for their sons and ensure their drawing a good number and being exempted from service in the barracks.... A strike broke out; the mutinous miners would no longer listen to anyone except *"l'pasteur Vincent"* whom they trusted.

BOTH as a man and as a painter Van Gogh was passionately Christian in feeling though, no doubt, a bit heterodox in doctrine. "Resignation," he declared, "is only for those who *can* be resigned, and religious belief is for those who *can* believe. My friends, let us love what we love. The man who damn well refuses to love what he loves dooms himself." Perhaps the best label for him as a painter would be Religious Realist. A realist because he attached supreme importance to the incessant study of nature and never composed pictures "out of his head"; religious because he regarded nature as the sacramental visible sign of a spiritual grace which it was his aim as a painter to reveal to others. "I want," he said once, "to paint men and women with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolise, and which we seek to convey by the actual radiance and vibration of our colouring." He is the first painter, so far as I know, to have consciously attempted to produce a painting which should be religious and yet contain no traditional religious iconography, something which one might call "A Parable for the Eye."

> Here is a description of a canvas which is in front of me at the moment. A view of the park of the asylum where I am staying; on the right a grey terrace and a side wall of a house. Some deflowered rose bushes, on the left a stretch of the park—red ochre—the soil scorched by the sun, covered with fallen pine needles. This edge of the park is planted with large pine trees, whose trunks and branches are red-ochre, the foliage green gloomed over by an admixture of black. These high trees stand out against the evening sky with violet stripes on a yellow ground, which higher up turns into pink, into green. A wall—also red-ochre—shuts off the view, and is topped only by a violet and yellow-ochre hill. Now the nearest tree is an enormous trunk, struck by lightning and sawed off. But one side branch shoots up very high and lets fall an avalanche of dark green pine needles. This sombre giant—like a defeated proud man—contrasts, when considered in the nature of a living creature, with the pale smile of a last rose on the fading bush in front of him. Underneath the trees, empty stone benches, sullen box trees; the sky is mirrored—yellow—in a puddle left by the rain. A sunbeam, the last ray of daylight, raises the sombre ochre almost to orange. Here and there small black figures wander among the tree trunks.
>
> You will realise that this combination of red-ochre, of green gloomed over by grey, the black streaks surrounding the contours, produces something of the sensation of anguish, called "rouge-noir," from which certain of my companions in misfortune frequently suffer. Moreover, the motif of the great tree struck by lightning, the sickly green-pink smile of the last flower of autumn serve to confirm this impression.
>
> I am telling you (about this canvas) to remind you that one can try to give an impression of anguish without aiming straight at the historic Garden of Gethsemane.

Evidently, what Van Gogh is trying to do is to substitute for a historic iconography, which has to be learned before it can be recognised, an iconography of colour and form relations which reveals itself instantaneously to the senses, and is therefore impossible to misinterpret. The possibility of such an iconography depends upon whether or not colour-form relations and their impact upon the human mind are governed by universal laws. Van Gogh certainly believed that they were and that, by study, any painter could discover these laws.

> The *laws* of the colours are unutterably beautiful, just because they are not *accidental*. In the same way that people nowadays no longer believe in a God who capriciously and despotically flies from one thing to another, but begin to feel more respect and admiration for faith in nature—in the same way, and for the same reasons, I think that in art, the old-fashioned idea of innate genius, inspiration, etc., I do not say must be put aside, but thoroughly reconsidered, verified—and greatly modified.

In another letter he gives Fatality as another name for God, and defines Him by the image—"Who is the White Ray of Light, He in Whose eyes even the Black Ray will have no plausible meaning."

Van Gogh had very little fun, he never knew the satisfactions of good food, glory, or the love of women, and he ended in the bin, but, after reading his correspondence, it is impossible to think of him as the romantic *artiste maudit*, or even as tragic hero; in spite of everything, the final impression is one of triumph. In his last letter to Theo, found on him after his death, he says, with a grateful satisfaction in which there is no trace of vanity:

> I tell you again that I shall always consider you to be something more than a simple dealer in Corots, that through my mediation you have your part in the actual production of some canvases, which will retain their calm even in the catastrophe.

What we mean when we speak of a work of art as "great" has, surely, never been better defined than by the concluding relative clause.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Critic of Our Time

By Richard Wollheim

ADRIAN STOKES'S writings on art, some of the most distinguished of our age, fall into two phases. In the first phase he wrote as an æsthete, with an æstheticism that was mannered yet also stringent and literal, rather close to Pater. In the second and present phase, the dominant influence is that of psycho-analysis, and in a number of books and articles Stokes has attempted a consistent and fairly comprehensive interpretation of various aspects of art in terms of Kleinian theory. He therefore deserves to be one of the most influential critics alive: a man who combines an eye trained by scrupulous attention to the actual surfaces of works of art with such understanding and knowledge of the deepest origins of artistic activity as modern science has to offer—is this not the ideal specification of the modern critic?

Mr. Stokes makes no attempt to conceal the fact that in order to understand his books one must understand the theory of which they are applications: and this, as I have indicated, is not orthodox Freudianism but the development or extension of it associated with Melanie Klein. On the validity of Kleinian theory I have no competence to pronounce, but it seems to me that (if true) it has greater potentialities as a tool in the understanding of Art than orthodox theory. But before elaborating this point, which is vital to our assessment of Stokes's criticism, I shall sketch in a background that may yet be unfamiliar to many.

THE starting-point of Melanie Klein's work is the problem of anxiety in small children: by pursuing this theme she was led to a number of fresh insights into the primitive mind. In the first part, she came to a revised conception of the id or reservoir of instinctual energy. For to Freud the id was predominantly identified with the libido or sexual impulse. From 1920 onwards (it is true) he suggested that alongside the libido was the death-instinct, and that man was the battle-ground of an "eternal struggle" between two groups of instinct, Eros and Thanatos. But this dualism remained with him an essentially speculative idea, and it was left to Klein to retrieve it from the realm of abstraction and to show in detail the rôle of the aggressive, as well as the sexual, urges in the life of the emotions.

Closely connected with the more complex view of the id, goes an increased attention paid to the ego and its mechanisms for dealing with instinct and anxiety. Freud had compared the relation of the ego to the id to that of a rider to a horse, and went on to specify a number of different ways in which one controls the other. The simplest and intuitively most obvious of these devices is that of repression: and Freud's most widely known work is undoubtedly that concerned with the fate or activity of repressed wishes and instinct. But he also considered other methods of dealing with stress and conflict. He refers occasionally, and ambiguously, to sublimation: in connection with melancholia and the development of the super-ego, he discusses introjection: paranoia is the result of projection. Some of these mechanisms are, however, incompletely specified, and it is a feature of Klein's work that she concentrates on a larger range of defences (*e.g.*, manic defence, idealisation), and also endeavours to specify in greater detail the rôle of each in the development of the psyche.

For Klein, like Freud, is essentially dynamic. She believes, that is, that from the beginning the infant is propelled along a course of development: new problems arise for it not simply out of old problems or from the environment, but in accordance with a trend or sequence of events —a trend which may be inhibited or arrested but which in itself provides the norm of development from which all deviations deviate. Klein's contribution to our knowledge of this trend is twofold. In the first place, she managed (by the evolution of special techniques of analysis) to trace it right back to birth itself, and indeed to find in events of the first few months experiences vital to later conflict and anxiety. Secondly, she isolated and defined the most important single psychological mechanism on which the infant's development depends: the rhythmic process of introjection-and-projection which sets up a kind of oscillation in all early object-relations. At first, the infant is attracted by objects that excite it or impinge on it: it descends on them, makes them part of itself, "incorporates" them in its own "inner world" of phantasy. But once having the objects inside it, it then wants to expel them, to reascribe them to the world. In doing so, though, it projects not just the objects

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as such but also the feelings with which it has invested them, and so peoples the world with persecutors (the painful objects) or benign forces (the pleasurable objects). And then the infant is ready for re-introjection. By means of this primordial process—which is not merely analogous to, but clearly influenced by, the primary physical processes of feeding and excretion—experience begins.

On a more descriptive level Klein distinguished two phases or "positions" in early development. In the first (the "paranoid-schizoid" position, so-called from its resemblance to a psychotic condition of later life), the infant lies at the mercy of objects (most particularly the mother's breasts) which alternately gratify and frustrate it and so arouse in it now pleasurable, now painful sensations. Lacking any conception of "whole" objects, the infant assigns differing sensations to different causes, and so arrives at a fragmented picture of the world, exaggerated by the ceaseless introjection-projection process. He feels himself surrounded by a multiplicity of objects, of which some are benign but most malevolent. In face of so much hostility he falls prey to persecutory anxiety, from which he seeks relief in a process of "splitting" the good from the bad and denying the bad.

Gradually, however (at the age of four or five months), through the operation of a reality-principle, the infant begins to realise that the objects of his hate and love are merely different aspects or moments of the same "whole-object," that the good or gratifying breast is one with the bad or frustrating breast, and accordingly that revenge wreaked upon what he hates is really destruction of what he loves. Faced with this terrible revelation, overburdened by concern for what he has done or wanted to do, he falls into a kind of depressive anxiety which is the prototype of much of what is later known as guilt. Depressive anxiety differs from persecutory anxiety in that it is not fear *for* the self and what might be done to it, but fear *of* the self and what it might do. To allay it the infant resorts straightway to the manic defence: to a denial, that is, of any aggressive designs upon the object of his love and equally of any concern or guilt, and a strenuous insistence upon bliss and exhilaration. Or worse still he may regress to the primitive splitting mechanisms of the "paranoid-schizoid" position. But ultimately none of this works: for denial and regression only increase fear, and fear increases anxiety. If the infant is to find any serene issue out of his anxiety, he must admit to himself the damage he has caused and recognise that the cause of it lies in himself, in his ambivalence, in the terrible but fundamental conjunction of love and hate, and then he must trust to his capacity to make reparation to the object that he has hurt. To do so he must recognise that the object is something whole and united, and yet independent of, and other than, him and his emotions. This is the crucial test for the ego's well-being and advancement: if it passes this test, it emerges integrated. Moreover, in the capacity to tolerate depression, to admit ambivalence, to offer reparation, is to be found the origin of most of what we value most in life: of unselfishness, of morality, of love, of art. Of Art—for in the creation of Form, which is one of the essential elements of Art, we have man's most sublime effort to amend, by the construction of whole objects, for his elemental destructiveness.

IN HIS latest work, *Greek Culture and the Ego*,* Mr. Stokes weaves a few more subtle and complex strands between Art and the successful transcendence of the depressive position. A work of art, I have said, can plausibly be regarded as a typical product of the integrated ego: but equally it can be regarded as a more or less adequate symbol of the integrated ego—and it is the symbolic, or mirroring, aspect of Art that provides the subject-matter of this book. Stokes argues that the Greek æsthetic canon with its emphasis on symmetry and proportion, on the one hand, and the all-importance of the human body, on the other, gave rise to a form of art in which this symbolical element achieves its consummation. For the insistence on proportion led to works of art in which the harmony, the integration, of the integrated ego found a direct physical correlate: and again, the concentration upon the human body as the supreme æsthetic motif, does justice to the fact that the integrated ego is essentially a "corporeal form," by which expression I take Stokes to mean that the ego is essentially bound up with a sense of physical identity and uniqueness. Now, the historical thesis of the book is that this supreme capacity of Greek art to mirror the integrated ego is not a mere coincidence, but is connected with the most general values and ideals of Greek culture. For if we examine not merely Greek art but Greek religion, Greek politics, Greek science, we find that the dominant attitudes asserted in these various spheres are just those which in Kleinian theory are connected with the successful "working through" of the depressive position: an appreciation of the variety and independence of phenomena, an acceptance of death and loss, a rejection of the transcendental, the shunning of everything exalted and immoderate. In a culture devoted as none before and perhaps none since to the maintenance of ego-values, it

* *Greek Culture and the Ego.* By ADRIAN STOKES. Tavistock Publications. 15s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not surprising that the art of the age should have celebrated the integration of the ego to a degree that has made it "the model and indeed the despair of many civilisations."

AFTER this brief "placing" of Stokes's criticism, I want to return to the problem of method and the question whether a Kleinian approach to art—an approach, that is, formed by Kleinian interests as much as by Kleinian theory—is likely to make a valuable contribution to art-criticism. For whatever we may think of this or that element in Stokes's work, it undeniably represents an attempt to interpret works of human creativity in a quite new and original way. What are we to think of this attempt, and how does it compare with criticism inspired by orthodox theory?

In the first place, Kleinian criticism does not demand material about the artist's mind and experience on the same extravagant and impossible scale as Freudian criticism. For Freudian criticism is essentially interpretation in terms of instinctual impulse: after a few cursory references to sublimation, the Freudian critic settles down to discover the "latent content" of the work before him, and in order to discover the latent content of a work of art, as of a dream (and Freudian art-criticism is closely modelled on Freudian dream-interpretation), one needs to know a great deal about the associations and circumstances of its creator. Kleinian criticism, on the other hand, by relating the work of art not to the variable impulses of the artist's id but to the invariable processes of the artist's ego, can dispense with voluminous biographical material. In other words, the change from a predominantly id- to a predominantly ego-interpretation has obvious economic advantages.

Secondly, by concentrating upon the content of the work of art, Freudian criticism laid itself open to the objection, often urged against it, that it ignored the specifically æsthetic aspect of art; for if products of identical content are treated identically, how do we distinguish between, say, a Leonardo and a day-dream or a child's game with the same motivation? Kleinian criticism has deliberately set itself to redress the balance. A work of art is defined in terms of the possession of certain formal characteristics and those characteristics are then analysed as the natural correlates or products of certain ego-processes. (At this stage, however, a word of warning. Any recognition that the analysis of a work of art is not exhausted by analysis of its content is welcome, but Mr. Stokes can perhaps be accused of extending the concept of form as freely as certain Freudians did that of content.)

On the other side of the balance sheet there are two objections, with which Mr. Stokes can probably deal, but I don't think he meets them in this book. In the first place, like other thinkers with a psychological theory about the nature of Art, he does not always distinguish between Art as creation and Art as object. That is to say, when he attributes a purpose or rôle to Art, is he talking about what the artist puts into the work of art or about what the spectator gets out of it? Perhaps Stokes doesn't feel it necessary to make the distinction because he thinks that the two are always or nearly always the same. But if he thinks this, then he must (like others before him) hold some hypothesis to the effect that the spectator when confronted with the work of art "re-lives" or "re-enacts" the creative process. But such a hypothesis, if held, should be stated. That the perception of Art is vicarious experience is not the sort of fact about human nature that we can afford to take for granted.

Secondly—and this relates specifically to *Greek Culture and the Ego*—I am immensely distrustful of anything that seems like "cultural psycho-analysis." "Culture mirrors contrasting ego-states," Mr. Stokes writes, and I wonder exactly how much he means. If he is merely saying that there is an identity of structure, an isomorphism, between certain kinds of ego and certain cultural manifestations, and that the ego often perceives the isomorphism where it exists, and uses it as a source of comfort or "life-enhancement," and that in certain cultures certain structures are particularly in evidence and so certain kinds of ego flourish there, I have no objection. But in any context in which this fact is relevant, it must also be relevant that the ego can sometimes perceive an isomorphism where no such isomorphism exists—as a result, for instance, of projection—and, to collect these cases we need to move out of "cultural analysis" and back to the study of particular histories. If, however, as I suspect, Mr. Stokes wants to claim that where there is an isomorphism between a work of art and a kind of ego, not merely does the ego thrive on the work of art but the work of art can, without further question, be causally attributed to the ego, then I feel that it is time for scepticism to assert itself. Art, science, religion, any branch of culture is an institution, and as such has a history of its own. This history is influenced by climate, by disease, by discovery, by death, by money, by coincidence, by a thousand factors that cannot be ultimately reduced to the elements of the psyche. And not only does the "institutional" aspect of culture defy psycho-analytical explanation, but it also determines the areas in which any such explanation is relevant. For the only features of culture that can be of significance to the analyst are those which can be regarded as "optional," those where, society

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imposing nothing, the individual is free to express himself, either in the unlimited sense that anything is possible or in the limited sense that choice can be made between socially determined alternatives. It is not always clear in Mr. Stokes's account of Greek art where he draws the line between the "expressive" and the "institutional" aspects of art, or whether he believes (*quia absurdum*) that the institutional aspect is itself susceptible to deep analysis.

MR. STOKES is a difficult writer: his sentences are highly condensed; he has a disturbing habit of inserting into his text quotations from psycho-analytical literature whose relevance to what he is saying is far from evident; and he carries indifference to the reader's self-confidence to the extent of using expressions like "I should say," "I take it that...," and "I think I am already discussing...." Worst of all, he presupposes throughout some direct acquaintance with psycho-analytical theory. But it would be sheer laziness and stupidity for anyone seriously interested in the visual arts to use these as excuses for not reading Mr. Stokes. Anyhow, why should we think the secret of Art is to be revealed to those who lack patience and knowledge?

For those who cannot accept the main theme of the book, there are many fascinating and suggestive asides: for instance, a thoughtful treatment of the question which an eminent art-historian once said to me he thought should be the starting-point of all æsthetics, why there is no art either of smell or of taste.

The Necessity of Aesthetics

By Stuart Hampshire

IT IS amazing that æsthetics, as a fully-developed philosophical enquiry, should have played so small a part in serious thought in this country in the last thirty years. It is almost as if the power to create, and to enjoy, works of art was taken to be accidental in men and an irrelevant contingency for anyone enquiring into the concept of mind. Yet even the most pragmatical of contemporary philosophers must reluctantly admit that men are essentially inclined to dream, to daydream, to imagine, and to entertain wishes and visions that could not possibly be realised. If their primitive philosophy of mind were pressed further, they would probably admit that play, pretence, make-believe, mimicry, ritual, and the celebration and enactment of natural and social processes, are all essential dispositions in men. We would scarcely believe a traveller's story of beings, otherwise human, who did not have these habits and institutions in any recognisable form. It is a crude philosophy that makes only the pursuit of reality, truth, essential to rational men, and free invention, the duplication of reality, an early and avoidable accident, easily eliminated. The errors that flow from this "scientific philosophy" have already shown themselves both in the philosophy of mind and in ethics. One cannot adequately characterise and distinguish forms of communication between persons, the forms of language and of the expression of feeling, if untruth is always identified with misinformation, and no place is left for the varieties of wilful seeming and of imagination.

These crudities in contemporary philosophy are gratuitous, since there is a tradition of philosophical æsthetics which could now be resumed and prolonged. Aesthetics becomes philosophical when the creation and enjoyment of works of art are shown to have a necessary place in some systematic ordering of human interests. The principal question in æsthetics is, "Why is art important?" and this presupposes an earlier question, "How is art, and the enjoyment of art, to be characterised?" Or "What is the domain of the æsthetic?" Neither of these questions can be answered without an appeal to some systematic philosophy of mind. The random judgments of common-sense, and the idioms of contemporary criticism, cannot be taken as reliable guides, since they are the relics of æsthetic arguments and philosophies now left unexamined. Yet there is a paradox intrinsic to æsthetics, as a philosophical enquiry, which is exactly parallel to the more familiar paradox of moral philosophy. The more confidently a philosopher claims universality for his æsthetic principles, as being independent of any particular conditions of time and place, the more likely it is that these principles will later seem a faithful reflection of the sensibility of his own particular time. Burke is a clear example. His

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brilliantly written, shrewd and original work, which almost immediately earned a European reputation, unquestioningly borrowed its method and the form of its conclusions from the philosophy of Hume.* Burke, like Mr. I. A. Richards in our century, congratulated himself on having made the principles of criticism at last truly scientific, experimentally secure, founded on the universal laws of sensation, and not on philosophical dogma and fashion. Never was an æsthetician more uncompromisingly realistic, down-to-earth, scientific in his intentions. I quote Burke on love, the sentiment that discovers beauty:

> When we have before us such objects as excite love and complacency, the body is affected, so as far as I could observe, in the following manner. The head reclines something on one side: the eyelids are more closed than usual, and the eyes roll gently with an inclination to the object, the mouth is a little opened, and the breath drawn slowly, with now and then a low sigh: the whole body is composed, and the hands fall idly to the sides. All this is accompanied with an inward sense of melting and languor.... From this description it is almost impossible not to conclude that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system.... Who is a stranger to that manner of expression so common in all times and in all countries, of being softened, relaxed, enervated, dissolved, melted away by pleasure?

After the "relaxing of the solids," Burke goes on to explain, with the aid of scientific psychology, why smoothness is beautiful and why sweetness is relaxing. Following his universal laws of nature, he in fact arrives at a vivid expression of the peculiar sensibility of his time: exactly as 18th-century artists, aiming at a timeless universality through classical style and classical subjects, achieved an effect that was almost absurdly characteristic of their own particular period. *The Sublime and the Beautiful* altogether misses the distinction between Art, as the product of free minds, and Nature, and consequently finds the secret of art, as a human interest, in the perceived, surface qualities of things and in the mechanism of association which they set in motion.

Mr. Boulton's introduction to this excellently produced and printed edition is painstaking and informative. He is more at ease in supplying the circumstances and literary background than in philosophical criticism.

KANT'S *Critique of Judgment* is the beginning of modern æsthetics, the turning-point after the simple-hearted naturalism of 18th-century essayists. Kant's philosophy provided a distinction between Nature and Spirit or active mind, and without the recognition of this distinction, in some form, a serious enquiry into the nature of art cannot even begin. Unfortunately, Mr. Knox's summary† of the three great German philosophers of art—and he adds Schiller to the three—is too compressed, and too arbitrary in its comments, to be of any real value, even as an introduction. Hegel certainly cannot survive this tabloid method. He is the only philosopher since Plato who combines philosophical principle with a sufficient range of concrete illustration in the interpretation of art: his philosophical principles prevent him from making universal claims for any one type of art, or even for any one type of æsthetics. The strength and weakness of his æsthetics have to be found in the justice and injustice of the historical details, often brilliantly just, and sometimes, and at the crucial points, wildly arbitrary. At any other level the argument is meaningless, and his main conclusion—that art becomes inessential, an obsolete and harmless plaything, in modern society—cannot be properly discussed. Kant, and his follower, Schiller, also lose their quality in this bare outline. They explained the necessary part of æsthetic experience in preparing men for moral freedom. But their notion of freedom itself requires elaborate explanation: it is not a simple intuitive notion.

Aesthetics is not a luxury, without practical relevance, as it may seem to be. What is the nature of the loss if men live wholly or largely without the enjoyment of art? Following upon an answer to this, one can further ask—Should any government, or should a Socialist government, subsidise art and within what limits? Why should artists be left to be free? Free both from requirement of State policy and from moral censorship? Can art corrupt and degrade? Are art and propaganda incompatible? These are familiar questions of day-to-day politics, and, when the concept of freedom enters, the division between opposing political programmes is taken back to its roots. In default of any open discussion of æsthetic theory, and therefore of the nature of art, vulgarised Marxism and the crude sophistries of social realism can still be pitted against theories of art for art's sake, as if these were the unavoidable alternatives. A whole tradition of argument about art and politics is being wasted.

---

* *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* By EDMUND BURKE. Edited by J. T. Boulton. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 32s.

† *The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer.* By ISRAEL KNOX. Thames & Hudson. 30s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From Shang Bronzes to Hiroshige

Chinese Art. By MARIO PRODAN. *Hutchinson.* 30s.

Chinese Painting. By PETER C. SWANN. *Zwemmer (Editions Pierre Tisné, Paris).* 3 gns.

An Introduction to the Arts of Japan. By PETER C. SWANN. *Bruno Cassirer, Oxford.* 45s.

2,000 Years of Japanese Art. By YUKIO YASHIRO. Edited by PETER C. SWANN. *Thames & Hudson.* 7 guineas.

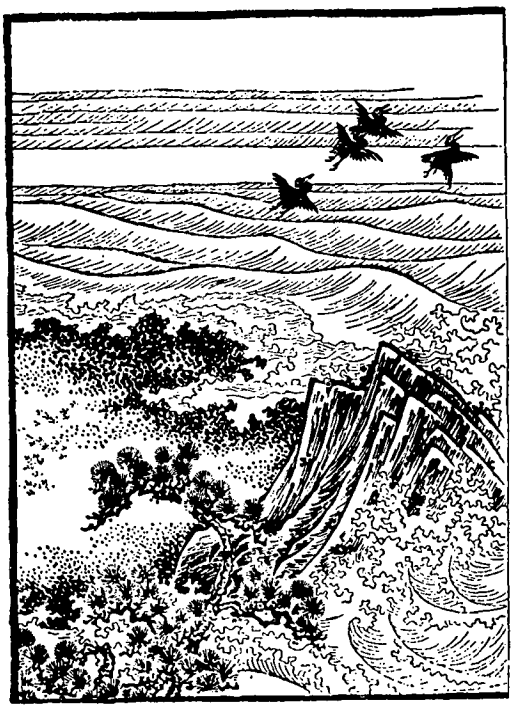
Masterpieces of the Japanese Colour Woodcut. By WILLY BOLLER. *Elek.* 8 gns.

EUROPEAN appreciation of the arts of China and Japan has developed by stages which have had nothing to do with the historical development of those arts themselves. It began with the taste for Chinese porcelain and lacquer in the 18th century, which, although it made the West familiar with Far Eastern decorative design, could give little idea of what was regarded in China as great art. In the second half ot the 19th century came the discovery of the Japanese colour print, a fascinating, but late and somewhat marginal, product of the Far Eastern æsthetic tradition. It has been only in the present century that there has been any widespread knowledge and appreciation of the earlier ages of both Chinese and Japanese art and of its greatest achievement—the ink-painting of the Sung and Yuan dynasties in China and the derivative schools of the Ashikaga period in Japan.

Of the five newly-published books listed above, two are devoted to the arts of China and three to those of Japan. The name of Peter C. Swann is common to three of them; Keeper of the Museum of Eastern Art in Oxford, he is to-day one of the best-equipped art historians in the Far Eastern field; he is himself the author of two of the books in question, one specially on Chinese painting and the other a general survey ot the arts of Japan, and he has also acted as editor for a monumental work by the eminent Japanese scholar Yukio Yashiro, who is well known not only for his expertise on the art of his own country but also for his book on Botticelli. Mario Prodan, who has written a general survey of Chinese art, is a collector who has lived for many years in China; he approaches the subject as an æsthete and *connoisseur* rather than a historian, though he provides the layman with an adequate historical framework for its development—more than 4,000 years as compared with the 2,000 of Yashiro's Japanese story. Another collector is Willy Boller, whose *Meister des Japanischen Farb-holzschnittes* now appears in an English edition; it is a proof of the quality and variety of his remarkable collection that he is able to do justice to his subject without going outside his own property for his illustrations.

Prodan's book points out the special difficulties in the way of real expertise in Chinese art due to chronological obscurities, which, he tells us, "endow it with the perverse interest of uncertainty." Archæological exploration in recent years has greatly increased the scope of our knowledge, but up to now has been too erratic and fragmentary to provide such a firm framework as we have for European art since Minoan times, and the vast hauls from the rifling of tombs, inspired by commercial motives, have given us many works of art without reliable information about them. As Prodan remarks in a perhaps too extreme generalisation, "real Chinese art came to us from tombs, with the exception of the paintings, of which we have only copies, and of porcelain dating from after the Sung dynasty." The problem of authenticity is complicated by the Chinese genius for the forgery of works of art, and Prodan has some moving accounts of the ways in which Western

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



(and often Chinese) collectors are taken in by skilled operators. But the certification of originals is not always essential to the appreciation of a great tradition of art, and some Chinese paintings which are probably only later copies of Sung masters are such great pictures in their own right that we can only be grateful for this copying habit.

The Chinese themselves in their traditional culture ranked poetry, calligraphy, and painting as the highest of the arts—a discrimination in which Western enthusiasts for bronzes, rock sculptures, and porcelain are not always willing to follow them—and in painting tended to rank monochrome ink styles above pictures in colour. Swann in an admirable study of the evolution of Chinese painting in its greatest period shows how ink-painting attained independence, and one of its most famous masterpieces—the *Six Persimmons* of Mu Ch'i—is reproduced on the jacket. There can be no doubt that the development of Western art since the beginning of the present century has given us a far greater capacity for appreciating this phase of Far Eastern art—in both its Chinese and Japanese variations—than would have been possible fifty years ago, and in both his recently published books Swann has given very valuable guidance to would-be travellers in this world of strange and subtle beauty.

Yashiro, however, though as a Japanese he pays suitable tribute to the art of Shubun and Sesshu, is more in love with the earlier Buddhist art, whose products have survived better in Japan than in China, and which was so much more adequately represented than the ink-painting in the recent exhibition of Japanese art in London—an exhibition which Yashiro himself took a leading part in organising. Yashiro's volume is dedicated to Bernard Berenson, "who in my youth guided me through my Italian studies, opening for me the door to Western art," and he is preoccupied with parallels with early Italian painting. He regards the Asuka, Nara, and Heian periods as the golden age of Japanese art, and with a wealth of splendid reproductions certainly succeeds in giving a masterly account of both the sculpture and the painting of those times. In his general history, on the other hand, he shows a marked distaste for Ukiyoye and excuses himself from dealing with it on the ground that there is already such an

The illustrations of works by Hokusai (p. 47) and Harunobu (p. 46) are from "Masterpieces of The Japanese Colour Woodcut" by Willy Boller. The poem, by Zengan, on the Harunobu reads:

Is it a visitor who knocks at the door
So deep in the night?
Is it the voice of the cuckoo?

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abundance of literature about it. Like many Japanese critics he retains the traditional view of Ukiyoye as a vulgar form of art and is resentful that for so many people in the West it should be representative of Japanese culture. But anyone turning from Yashiro's book to Boller's no less lavishly illustrated volume devoted to the masters of the colour print must have indeed a sadly restricted taste if he derives no pleasure from the works of Sukenobu, Harunobu, Utamaro, and Hokusai which fill these pages. It is, in the words of a foreword by T. Burckhart, "a felicitous blend of the refinement and wisdom of an ancient artistic tradition with an immediate and joyous response to life." Or, as Swann puts it in his book, "it was art for the masses, but the most highly developed and sophisticated the world has ever seen."

G. F. Hudson

Donatello and the Rest

Italian Renaissance Sculpture. By JOHN POPE-HENNESSY. *Phaidon*. 90s.

EARLY in this book, Mr. Pope-Hennessy remarks, in the kind of aside which is apt to tell one as much as the best weighed conclusions, that in his last years Donatello "developed the first style of old age in the history of art." There are strokes as arresting as this on most of these pages, but one finds oneself dwelling on this one. The way in which the 15th century evolved forms and types which both initiated and curiously prefigured (indeed in some respects very nearly completed) the whole European achievement is an essential theme of the book, and Donatello's last years provide a striking personal instance of it: the characteristic kind of individual development and stature inseparable from the European achievement always does strike one. One dwells on this remark not so much because it is obviously true, as because one does not quite know what it means.

There are, of course, two different kinds of Quattrocento sculptor, Donatello and the other kind: Donatello gives us our first full measure of the fact that the great artists of modern Europe are each of them *sui generis*, essentially incomparable with any other. But apart from this general separateness and originality, just what is the recognisably extreme state which Donatello, first of all artists, arrives at in his late work? Is what we recognise simply a certain profound mannerism of the late and great —the visible signs of a typical state in which the occlusion of vision and a characteristic mood of pessimism and impatience lead naturally to certain qualities—simplification, ascetic ruggedness, summary handling, and distortion? Sometimes it seems so. Here and elsewhere Mr. Pope-Hennessy is quick, quicker than most artists would be, to notice the distortions, the disproportion of physical parts, "preternaturally" or "exaggeratedly" long limbs, and so on. His invariably close attention to the character of image and illustration is certainly salutary. We are still, in spite of all we have been told, more prepared to attend to any other kind of recreation than to a great artist's re-imagining of his narrative subject matter. When analysis from these standpoints is complete—and it has never in English writing on Italian sculpture been nearly so complete and balanced as it is here—the character of some styles is well exposed.

The extreme point of Donatello's late style is extreme in respects which prose analysis cannot easily expose at all: it is extreme, among other things and perhaps above all others, in the character which it gives to and takes from the physical material of sculpture. The hardness and toughness of Donatello, which carry so much of the meaning of his work, achieve at the end an extraordinary transformation. The expressive force which fills the forms, twisting them, grooving and creasing their surface and at last breaking their substance apart, changes the material nature of the sculpture. The substance becomes segmented, lacerated, separating, as if in a powerful unravelling of its plaited, rope-like inner strength, into elemental strips and cords.

The materials of this consummation are the soft media of sculpture, modelling and carved wood; they are materials which can be made completely the artist's property, as much his own as if they emanated from him. They can be humanly moulded as later in the history of art only paint can be moulded. One would have to love Tintoretto very much to feel at once the justice of Mr. Pope-Hennessy's comparison of the late Donatello to him. But, it may be just: it is certainly very significant.

Each of the great late styles of Europe is perhaps a further discovery of the same kind as Donatello's, a new discovery of some such autonomous character in the actual physical material of art. It is a character which has steadily increased in significance, and we see more and more of the specific weave of form or paint, free and open yet inherently tough, *stringy*, which mysteriously often goes with it. (When Mr. Pope-Hennesy supposes that "Luca della Robbia must speak more directly than any 15th-century Italian sculptor . . . to those who approach . . . from the standpoint of the present day," it is perhaps the less grossly material, less pregnant abstractions of the day before yesterday that he has in mind.)

This book is the second of the three volumes

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Mr. Pope-Hennessy's Introduction to Italian Sculpture. If the work can be completed on this level (one holds one's breath as the Baroque approaches, no doubt unnecessarily), it will be as remarkable a feat of historical criticism as the times can show. If the introduction could introduce more—and perhaps it could not; none could well be fuller—one might wish for a more continuous sense of the physical materials of sculpture and their spell. That sense one must get, if not from other, historically disreputable kinds of writing, in Italy for oneself. If one longs to try the book out in one place more than another, it is in the Tempio at Rimini, where the reasoning leads to a conclusion that the presiding sculptor was not Agostino di Duccio after all (the unlucky Agostino has, one feels, been attracting the wrong kind of support.) He is replaced by Matteo de' Pasti, apparently on the grounds that the inscription names him as the architect. This book is not only an introduction. It is a companion that we shall surely keep with us all our lives.

Lawrence Gowing

Baroque Conceptions of Art

Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600-1750. By Rudolf Wittkower. *Penguin Books*. 70s.

This book crystallises the achievement over thirty years not only of one individual art-historian but of a whole generation. During that time the Italian Baroque has become "established," has become indeed the field of art history in which larger discoveries have been made, more enlightening exhibitions held, and more intensive work done than in any other. Since the last war the pace of research has been fantastic. Yet Professor Wittkower knows it all, he has made vital contributions to it himself, and anyway he was exploring Baroque churches morning after morning in Rome at a time (the 1920's) when only a few Continental specialists shared his enthusiasm and the name of Bernini, if mentioned in artistic circles in England, would have provoked nothing but bewilderment and contempt. In its approach as well, this is a book highly representative of the avant-garde in art-historical studies. Before the war it was possible to discuss Baroque art, like the art of any other period, more or less in terms of the development of style alone. To-day, content is the central problem, and even the content of architecture is taken into account. What ideas and feelings were artists trying to express? What means did they employ to express them? What is the significance of their imagery, above all of their religious imagery? The subtle, detailed, and illuminating answers which Professor Wittkower gives to these questions are the key to the present book.

Consider, for instance, his account of Bernini. In a monograph which he published on this artist a few years ago, he concentrated mainly on the rhetorical element; that is to say, on Bernini's attempt to draw the spectator physically and emotionally into the "aura" of his figures. "By looking at Bernini's realistic *St. Bibiana* [represented in an attitude of intense devotional fervour] the spectator's sympathy is roused, he feels with her and tries to identify himself with her experience." Or in the Cornaro Chapel in front of the *Vision of St. Teresa*: "The worshipper participates in the supra-human mystery shown on the altar, and if he yields entirely to the ingenious and elaborate directions given by the artist, he will step beyond the narrow limits of his own existence and be entranced with the causality of an enchanted world." In the present book, too, these aspects of Bernini's art receive a good deal of attention. But the balance is better, other aspects are discussed as well and we are made to realise that the feelings and ideas which Bernini expressed in his work are reducible to no simple formula. It used to be a common error to suppose, and an innocent reader of the earlier book might be forgiven for supposing, that Bernini's work is primarily to be regarded as a kind of visual equivalent of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. In fact, as we can now see, the techniques of persuasion of which Bernini was so adept a master were only one element of an exceedingly complex conception of art—meaning by "art," not pure form, but a language of visual signs and symbols which were used for the expression of ideas.

Thus the portrait bust of Louis XIV embodies the idea of absolute monarchy; the *Vision of St. Teresa* is an image of spiritual ecstasy; the *Longinus* is an image of spiritual conversion; the *Cathedra of St. Peter* is an exposition of the sources of papal authority; and so on. With every subject that he tackled Bernini sought to render not only its external form but its essential significance. It is to be noted, however, that he achieved this aim largely by visual means. Unlike most Renaissance artists who had a complex theme to communicate, Bernini did not employ an elaborate repertoire of emblems; as far as he could he made the form itself express the idea. The *Louis XIV*, for example, contains no explicit attributes of monarchy; all we need to be told is the name of the sitter and the rest follows. The qualities of pride, nobility, and heroism which the artist considered to be appropriate to the subject are sufficiently summed up in the pose, the turn of the head, the set of the eyes,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the nose, the fluttering drapery. In a work of sculpture by Bernini there are not many forms whose function is solely to contribute to the harmony of the design. (Hence, of course, the distaste for his art in the 'twenties.) Very often, moreover, the mere *choice* of one form rather than another is meaningful. In the age of the Baroque, specific form had specific associations, and these associations changed according to the context in which the forms appeared. This applied particularly to architecture. Thus for the plan of the piazza in front of St. Peter's, Bernini chose an oval rather than a circle because the latter form would have been too perfectly geometrical and therefore too abstract; the oval, on the other hand, naturally suggested itself as a symbol of the all-embracing arms of the Church. Similar considerations governed the choice for the elevation of isolated columns with a straight entablature rather than the more traditional arcade with attached orders.

The thirty-five densely-packed yet lucid pages devoted to Bernini form the core of the book. The chapters or sections on the other leading artists of the High Baroque are handled on the same lines and almost as well. Just when one had thought that Bernini must have exhausted all the available possibilities of the time, one turns over the page to the opening of the Borromini chapter and discovers a totally different artistic personality, not so comprehensive perhaps but no less original. And so on. And so on. The diversity of High Baroque art, as Wittkower reveals it to us, is not the least astonishing thing about it.

Outside this central period his method is less successful. This is either because the artists concerned had a muddled conception of art (the late Mannerists, Caravaggio; despite all Wittkower's efforts we are still almost completely in the dark about what Caravaggio's art really means); or because their conception of art was elusive (Tiepolo) or frivolous (the late Baroque sculptors); or because they had no conception of art worth speaking of in Wittkower's sense at all (Canaletto, Guardi). It is no accident that by far the best chapter on a subject outside the High Baroque is that on the Carracci, whose aims, like Bernini's, were coherent, varied, and readily susceptible to intellectual analysis.

It has been said by almost all reviewers that the book is unbalanced for reasons of editorial policy in the design of the Pelican History of Art, of which it is a part, the accusation being that the author was asked to undertake far too much in the space available in a single volume. No doubt, given the opportunity, he would have liked to expand certain sections if he could have omitted others. However, it does not follow that he would have essentially changed the emphasis

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and it seems to me that the book as it stands gives a just reflection of his point of view. By an extraordinary paradox, that point of view was first expressed by Ruskin, who detested Italian Baroque art as vehemently as Wittkower admires it: "I say that the art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas." Wittkower, of course, would not put the matter in terms of value judgments, as Ruskin does. But that statement is, I think, a fair commentary on the direction of his interests. Canaletto gets a paragraph, Bernini thirty-five pages. But how many ideas had Canaletto compared with Bernini?

This book is a masterpiece. But it is a masterpiece of a particular kind. Primarily it is a history of conceptions of art in Italy in the 17th century; in this respect it is brilliant. Secondarily it is a history of Italian Baroque trends, tendencies and developments in the orthodox manner; in this respect it will for ever be essential to the specialist. What cannot be discovered from it, or only on rare occasions, is what Italian Baroque art actually, physically looks like. (It is symptomatic that nowhere does the author mention that Roman architecture is built largely in travertine, one of the most beautiful types of stone in the world.) I found it rather depressing that while reading the book I hardly ever felt like turning up the plates: the text and the diagrams were enough.

Michael Kitson

India's Dilemma

India and Modern Art. By W. G. Archer. *Allen & Unwin.* 35s.

It is a commonplace to ridicule the Victorians for their obtuseness towards Indian art, and nobody has suffered more than Sir George Birdwood for his statement in the official guide to the Indian collections at the South Kensington Museum that "sculpture and paintings are unknown as fine arts in India." There is of course some logic in his remark. Hubristic as it is, and based on a misapprehension, it does by implication acknowledge the distinction between art as living craft, anonymous and expressive collective values (as Birdwood found it in India) and art as the self-conscious expression of personality which we associate with the European fine art tradition. What Birdwood and his contemporaries failed to recognise was the nature of the social transformation which these differences reflect. Whereas in Europe the fine art tradition had taken centuries to mature as part of a long and gradual process of social change, in India it was

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expected that it could be introduced ready-made into a basically feudal society, like the railways and the telegraph.

Faced with the collapse of Indian craft tradition, the Victorian remedy was the introduction of Art Schools on the British model. With the help of copies of Old Masters and classical casts, Indians were taught to imitate an already decadent academic style. This solved none of the existing problems but instead created the new one of how to find employment for those so painfully trained. Mr. Archer records that at least the students enjoyed the European nudes, which they regarded as " 'naked English ladies' kindly provided for their delectation by an understanding government."

This was the situation when E. B. Havell became head of the Calcutta Art School in 1896. Havell was one of the few who recognised that the policy of anglicising India was myopic and false. He it was who realised that British art "gave no spiritual impulse and afforded only the poorest mental pabulum, with its mechanical perspective, not related like oriental perspective to the laws of design but only empirically, to the science of optics."

This attitude was revolutionary. It earned for Havell his reputation as "father" of modern Indian art. Yet the outcome was disappointing. While talking about a return to "native *living* traditions", his followers limited their attention to court cultures of an extinct and almost forgotten past—in particular the Ajanta frescoes and Mughal miniatures. One kind of eclecticism was substituted for another, and the results were correspondingly literary and sentimental.

The first three chapters of Mr. Archer's book are a brilliantly readable and informative survey of this background to modern Indian painting, bringing together much material forgotten or overlooked. He then turns to the third phase, which produced the four painters who are central to his theme.

These painters, chosen as the most representative of the modern movement, are Rabanindranath Tagore (the poet), Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, and George Keyt, all of whom produced their important work between 1928 and 1950. Mr. Archer contrasts them with their predecessors of the Havell period. Instead of styles induced by acts of reasoning and faith, these later painters were stimulated by direct, authentic expression of feeling, which led them to formal experiment and brought them into relationship with the modern art movement of Europe. In almost every other respect, these artists differed markedly from each other. Tagore (perhaps inspired in the first place by Klee) was India's first painter of the unconscious; Amrita Sher-Gil used a Paris art-school training to record with realism India's poverty and hunger; Jamini Roy (who began at the Calcutta Art School under Havell) returned to the folk-art of his village in self-conscious experiments with form; Keyt (first a poet) absorbed himself in *Cahiers d'Art* in his search for a visual technique appropriate to Indian romance.

Mr. Archer analyses the development of each of these painters with individual sympathy and perception, discussing every stage in relation to corresponding art developments in Europe, and to contemporary events in India. Nobody could disagree that these are the four most interesting painters of their day and that individually they produced fine work. Yet one is left with the gnawing thought that perhaps the future will see them more as heroic figures in isolation (existing by grace of European patronage) than as representatives of a modern movement. If this is so, the emergence of a genuine modern art tradition may still be awaiting some kind of social change needed to give the "fine arts" a place in non-Europeanised society.

John Irwin

How to Ignore Modern Art

Art Since 1945. *Thames and Hudson.* 90s.

THE point of "Art Since 1945," if not of this book by nine critics, is the emergence of a new kind of abstract painting in America —or, rather, of several new kinds of painting, much of it abstract, mostly in New York City.

The painter Milton Resnick dropped by one day and saw *Art Since 1945* on a table. "Oh," he said, "I heard I've got a reproduction in that; can I see it?" "Sure," I said, "here's your illustration" (plate 168). "Oh, yes," he said ruefully, "upside-down." "Well," I said, "let's go to lunch." "Let me see what they say about me first," he asked. "Sure," I said, "it says here that you are a 'powerful, almost deliberately clumsy artist who trowels paint on canvas in lavish slabs' [that 'lavish slabs' is pretty good], and that 'behind' your 'blunt force' and elementary simplicity is a well-stocked artistic memory [oh, that 'artistic memory'] 'and a sensitive responsive intelligence.' " "It sounds as if I'm in some category," said Resnick, who is a highly original artist, "probably as a follower of deKooning?" And sure enough, one paragraph up the page, there he was, listed as "directly under deKooning's influence."

That "under" might have been a pun, because Resnick's studio happens to be directly under Willem deKooning's. But this fat book is too "serious" for that. After all, it publishes Sir Herbert Read's glorification of the archetypal Womb-and-Doom in Henry Moore. And any

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book that can do that can do anything but joke—although Freud's ghost happily interposes with a hilarious sentence on page 194 in which Glarner and Giacometti get hopelessly mixed up.

Reading the book was a difficult experience. There is the inevitable prose-poem on the late Nicolas de Staël, and about how he wanted to incorporate "the figure—often a mere aura of a figure, an astral body so to speak, an element freed from the heaviness and opacity of crude matter—into a composition without material substance, without weight," and that because this was "for him an insurmountable problem" he killed himself. Or, as the author says, "died from having dreamed too much." This is the sort of corpse-chewing that makes art-writing a disgrace to prose.

The book is worse than useless, it is terrifyingly boring, and it presents so distorted a view of "Art Since 1945" that there is some danger that (just because it is so boring) it might be used as a text for students.

The main subject, the arrival of the new kinds of American painting from the underground world in which they had developed to a position of international influence, is sometimes mentioned, often explained away, and, in the case of the section on the U.S., given the now-standard inspirational common-sense explanation. The American author, Sam Hunter, interviewed artists, and when he could get them to talk, and when he could understand what they were saying, he does well by them (notably Guston and Motherwell). More often he categorises with the wrong categories (*viz.*, "abstract *vs.* realist"), and takes the phenomenological (It's Up, It's Down, It's Bouncing) way with souped-up descriptions. The European authors have little left but the soup. (If only the International Police would fix a fine of 100 pounds on the trope "Doe's work offers a close parallel to the poetry of... Dylan Thomas, Eliot, Mallarmé, Euripides...," followed by long quotations which only emphasise the slack qualities in art-critics' language, art-books would become instantly two inches thinner.)

If the book is *indiscutable*, except for some handsome colour-plates, its subject remains central to the problem of culture to-day. Perhaps a few peripheral notes might be adduced:

Many New York artists were "converts" and changed styles practically overnight. But there are as many different kinds of converts as there are different kinds of style. All Sauls don't become Pauls.

It is possible to distinguish between artists who feel an historical necessity, who are part of an *avant-garde*, and those who believe the situation is open, and that the only concept that is impossible to art is the idea that something is im-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

possible to it.

The New York School is a direct continuation of the School of Paris; it is international and cosmopolitan, but there is a pressure of intentions that gives New York art its look. These are images that could not have appeared otherwise, which accounts for the profound dissatisfaction some artists feel with their own work. (In this sense, a Parisian like Giacometti relates to deKooning.) The "light" of New York is important, but its metaphysics are crucial.

The most important new concept in American art is that "everything" can be art, and that art can be "everything." A collage will be made of the studio-environment (as the Cubists did), but the studio environment will expand to embrace the whole scene. A painting can comment; it can make a statement about anything and everything. A black-and-white painting by Franz Kline is the opposite of Ivory Tower or Basement painting. Not art-in-the-service-of-life (like Mondrian), but part of an art-life. Thus American painting is intellectual and, in a profound way, elegant. But without style.

Of course there is a style in not having a style. But in that sentence, "style" changes meaning.

Tachisme, or Paris or Italian or German or Spanish or Japanese American-type painting, uses different intentions under different pressures. The result is interior decoration and the objects are acceptable as chintz.

There are chintzy American painters, too.

A "closed" image is one which the artist has so perfected that there is no room for anyone else to work in the space between the idea and the image. The great Paris masters have been dedicated since around 1938 to closing-off their images. There must be half a million dead pictures, painted between 1945 and 1950, that tried to find an inch of air in between the idea and the stroke on Bonnard's flowering hills.

The American images are still open. Second and even third and fourth waves of young artists have found plenty of room to work in the wide-open space that exists, for example, between deKooning's Woman-Landscape in the mind and on the canvas.

The official New York art-world (curators, trustees, collectors), which with a very few exceptions has always been hostile to the new American art, finally accepted its works of 1945–50. Then, as devotees of the *petit frisson*, they called for a revolution—such as back to Magic Realism or to Solid Painting. Anything but accept the fact that with the new appearance of art has come a new continuity.

Meanwhile, American artists seem to be at work in as long a day as that one which dawned in Paris with Impressionism.

Thomas B. Hess

No Such Thing as Art

The Arts, Artists and Thinkers, an Inquiry into the Place of the Arts in Human Life. A Symposium edited by JOHN M. TODD. *Longmans.* 35s.

PUBLISHERS dearly love the sound of people banding together to make corporate statements on large questions. The trouble, lately, is that their symposiums are apt to throw up so much concealed, unwitting or unwilling dissension that they go entirely sour. And so it is with this one, which consists of the reprinted papers of a group of Catholics who came to the Benedictine Abbey of Downside to deliver them, and which is split from beginning to end by a disagreement as to the nature of what is being discussed: "the matter of man the artist," according to the opening paper, "needs looking into." What disturbs the inquiry is the best and longest essay, which takes up a clear and challenging position and is softly disregarded by almost all the others. There could hardly fail to be one or two instructive papers; the strength falls on the visual side with papers by Eric John on the question of belief in mediæval art and by Joseph Rykwert on "The Modern Age." But this disagreement, combined with the lax and commonplace character of most of the contributions, makes it difficult to doubt that the answer to the question, what do they think, as a group of Catholics, about artists and thinkers is: nothing.

There is plenty of agreement as well, of course, and the less interesting papers share certain familiar and expected features. The Middle Ages, in the stillness of which "the nightingales were singing," have a shadowy supremacy, and the present century is a time of rooks, when "the common man" whores after television or sits stupefied in a sort of perpetual charabanc. A former B.B.C. producer tells how B.B.C. producers are "quietly sick" at having to pander to the common man's "hatred and lust." Running through the poorer essays is a high, bland exclusiveness which takes the arts out of ordinary life and guarantees them separate and pure. "Aesthetic experience is the twin brother of mystical experience," poems are "ditties of no tone" (and are seldom quoted except by way of elegant illustration), and the painter digs his brush into some very ghostly substances. This concern for the purity of art has obvious traces of the kind of idealism put to use by Croce and others, as well as of the views of such 19th century moralists as Arnold who thought of the arts as a successor to religion. It is hard to see why Catholics should want to keep company like this, and most of these ones do, though the one

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissenting voice is strong enough in itself to make the whole conference appear divided and confused.

Very many of the speakers seem to feel that the terrific range of form and intention in the arts has no real bearing on the attempt to find a place for them in human life, and that the vital thing about works of art is their resemblance to one another, a readily discussable quality which can be made to serve as an element in religious experience. Few of them, therefore, pay much attention to the content of individual works. The editor wanted an "empirical" approach but the mandate given to the speakers, many of whom are highly qualified in particular ways, has produced something essentially different. Even the practising artists are anxious to talk not about their work but abstrusely, about the status of their work and the sanctions that can be found for it.

All this, again, is in striking contrast with the best essay in the book. Father Vincent Turner on "The Desolation of Aesthetics" provides solid grounds for questioning the force and relevance of over half the testimony it contains. Whereas an earlier paper starts by offering an account of the æsthetic teaching of the Schoolmen, Fr. Turner starts by denying that there is any such thing. He makes his sharp and stately objections to the metaphysical basis of æsthetics by describing the way Hegelian antecedents were used by Croce and Collingwood and by pointing to the damaging presence in general currency of a depleted version of their ideas. He pushes his argument to the stage where it becomes a mystery why anyone should seek to enquire into the similarities that might exist between the methods and satisfactions appropriate to each of the arts, and he may perhaps forget how much has been learnt by applying one art to another. But his views could have done the surrounding discussion a great deal of good, and it is sad that so little notice was taken of them. There would have been less talk about the artist's need to be original and free and more about his individual achievements: anyone's sense of the arts is to a considerable degree the sense of this, that, and the other works, and not of a unitary something into which personalities and distinctions have largely disappeared. One would have expected Catholic readers, for example, to be exercised by the poetry of Eliot or the novels of Graham Greene or, for that matter, by the work of their agnostic contemporaries. At the very least an effort might have been made to consider Fr. Turner's objections. If "there is no such thing as art," as he suggests, there is no such thing as a symposium about arts, artists, and thinkers.

Karl Miller

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Restrictive Practices

The Philosophy of Art History. By ARNOLD HAUSER. *Routledge.* 35s.

IT IS too early to define the influence of refugee scholars born and trained in Central Europe upon the study and understanding of art in this country and upon English taste, but this has certainly been radical and extensive. For twenty-five years, by teaching and practical example, they have planted here various historical methods and disciplines which were originally formulated abroad; it is obvious enough that many of the locals have been using them without much sense of their ideological sources. Now Professor Hauser's excellent and important book, the first of its kind to be published in London, comes along to tell us, in a sense, what has been happening and, by reminding us of the philosophical sources of art-historical practice, to demand criticism of the achievement of art-historical research and the validity of its existing approaches. With few exceptions, English writers have not given much attention to the philosophy of history, let alone of the history of art, as is shown by the very few references in this book to Anglo-Saxon authors; Riegl, Wölfflin, Simmel, Max Weber, Max Dvorak, these are some of the pivots of Professor Hauser's study. He is concerned with the methodology of art history and he offers a sequence of self-sufficient essays on the sociological, the ideological, the psychological, and the stylistic, this last, called "Art History without Names" and based upon the methods of Wölfflin, being the largest and the most impressive.

Professor Hauser's method is rigorous and searching throughout, but his demeanour is so modest that there are not only occasions when he fails to press home his argument in matters of detail but also a certain failure to build upon the evidence of his skilful analysis. At the beginning of an essay on Originality and the Conventions which is the least successful and persuasive in the book, he summarises his own liberal philosophy of art. "The work of art," he writes, "is at once form and content, an affirmation and deception, play and revelation, natural and artificial, purposeful and purposeless, within history and outside of history, personal and super-personal." And it is this conviction which directs the analysis and criticism of the historical methods he considers. But unless I have missed an element in his concentrated argument he does not seem to construct from this philosophy the necessarily dependent philosophy of art history.

Before suggesting what this should be, it is important to distinguish between two motives for art-historical research. In one form art history exists simply as an occupation for the intellectual worker. It would be interesting to examine how modern scholarship—and not only in this field—has been influenced by the need to provide intellectual employment. If research and the academic population continue to increase, the day may come when it will be as necessary to set up unions and establish rules governing the division of labour among the intellectual craftsmen and proletariat as it has been found to make regulations in shipyards about the drilling of holes. Art history in this rôle leads to a condition which Professor Hauser rightly and effectively criticises. "The greatest danger... is that it should become a mere history of forms and problems. Let it once yield to this danger and not only the individual works and the personalities of artists but also the historical situation, with the particulars of life obtaining, come to seem more or less irrelevant." There are, however, those whose enquiries are motivated by an ardent determination to understand the nature of art and its place in the life and history of man. Such men are not only liable to produce the most valuable work but it is they alone who can and should construct the more profound standards of scholarship.

The limited methods analysed in this book are both explicable and puzzling. Wölfflin's stylistic formulations, principles such as the linear and the painterly, were deeply expressive of the generation which watched an established Impressionism being succeeded by contrary interests and intentions, above all by a renascent classicism. And the growth of close iconographical study is at least partly connected with the establishment of art history as an academic discipline. There is a sense in which that discrimination of the formal characteristics of art which determined Wölfflin's limited idea of style and which is really a matter of controlled, conscientious sensibility may seem a less respectable academic discipline than the interpretation of literary sources, for modern scholarship is founded upon the handling of texts. It is easier to examine a student upon the symbolism of Botticelli's *Primavera* than upon Giorgione's influence on Titian.

The exclusiveness of most of the established art-historical methods is compatible with the art of the 20th century, much of which has been similarly restricted in aim. Cubism was essentially an experiment in structural and spatial projection and can be interpreted in terms of style and of minute stylistic mutations. Dadaism was an exercise in social and cultural criticism and asks to be treated in sociological and ideological terms. Action painting, as a record of human behaviour and of the unconscious, invites psychological scrutiny and a vitalist inter-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pretation. None of these methods of inspection would in fact be sufficient—a Giedion will be concerned to attach Cubism to the history of ideas—but if such exclusiveness does provide an encouragement to be very partial, there has been another important condition of the modern culture which invites a different attitude, namely the vast enlargement of our experience of art as revealed in the museums and the museums without walls. And the coexistence of the diverse and often contradictory objects to be found there must surely threaten the confidence of any sensitive and thoughtful scholar who uses a limited method of identification or any writer who can say: "Art is. . . ."

The unavoidable lesson of Hauser's book is that art-historical method needs to be both eclectic and flexible, eclectic so as not to do unjustifiable violence to the inherent and subtle complexity of works of art, flexible so that it can respond to that varying mixture of social, material, and spiritual sources which he properly describes. It is significant that the modern study of art history was in its origins a Central European phenomenon; this accounts both for its systematics and its dependence so far upon explanations of art which are both limited and ardently pursued. This country might seem to be a favourable place for the empirical attitude which any eclectic method must demand, if it were not that there exists a local prejudice against a disciplined intellectual examination of the arts. It is instructive to place Professor Waterhouse's book on English painting, which is to some degree eclectic but applies its various methods half-heartedly and with a faulty discrimination, beside Panofsky's magnificent study of Early Netherlandish Painting or Otto von Simson's work on the Gothic Cathedral. Both suggest that art history is moving out of its primitive phase, and both illuminate Hauser's demand that the consideration of style should be the centre of any method. Any scholarly historical analysis which is also to be true to the varying nature of art must depend upon the ability, not to be bought second-hand, to respond to and re-create in words those images wherein the creative complex has been embodied. This warm understanding of their subject gives a truthful vitality to the two books mentioned, gives a density to their intricate discussion of iconography and ideas; it is a certain crudity of appreciation which prevents Antal's book on Florentine art from being entirely persuasive. The art historian needs to show two kinds of empathy: an imaginative engagement in the sense used by Worringer, and that power of intellectual empathy which Hauser's book so excellently defines.

Basil Taylor

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shorter Notices

The Picture Encyclopaedia of Art. *Thames & Hudson.* 4 gns. Something of a sport among art books. The material is divided into period sections, each with introduction, large plates, and glossary of artists, buildings, technical terms, and so on. These entries are profusely illustrated but the works shown are not dated or measured. Entries, which reflect a bias towards German art, are often a mixture of fact and critical opinion. Most are very short and disappointing. For example, one could not look up "Etching" and then go and bite a copper plate (unless one knew how to do it anyway). One cannot imagine anyone using this book once they had looked at all the pictures.

A Concise History of Art. By GERMAIN BAZIN. *Thames & Hudson.* 35s. Dealing with painting, sculpture, and architecture from pre-history to the present, this is an ambitious book. Bazin handles the vast quantity of material with skill and clarity. He never allows us to lose sight of the fact that art history is a humanistic study. His attitude is eminently French: his æsthetic derives from Focillon and Malraux; his style is dry and unrhetorical. The book is well illustrated, handy to use, and excellent value for money. There are several misprints and the index is inadequate.

A History of Book Illustration. By DAVID BLAND. *Faber & Faber.* 4 gns. The concise text, few notes, and many illustrations are admirably arranged for convenient reading or reference. Price and weight are moderate considering the vastness of the subject it aims to cover—the illuminated manuscript and the printed book throughout the world from an Egyptian papyrus of c. 1300 B.C. to the present day. The author apologises for disposing in two short chapters of "nearly one thousand years of the illuminated manuscript in the West," but for the non-specialist reader these chapters, together with the others in the first half of the book, are in many ways the most helpful: inaccessible material is perspicuously presented and learned arguments are summarised so that the trees really enable us to see the wood. On the more familiar 17th–20th-century ground the disadvantages of over-compression are more in evidence (*e.g.*, a statement on p. 209 about Watteau and Claude which is so severely telescoped as to become misleading). Furthermore, it must be admitted that the book is not very readable.

The Complete Book of Artists' Techniques. By KURT HERBERTS. *Thames & Hudson.* 3 gns. It looks as if the author did not know what kind of book he wanted to write. He deals with the inherited techniques of painting and drawing in a most off-hand way, and does not get down to brass tacks until he reaches his long appendices. These illustrate experiments in the supposed techniques of Faiyum encaustic, the Pompeian decorations, and the Cave painters, and they are intriguing but utterly irrelevant. The mass of questions that bother the artist (Why do certain colours dry slower than others? Why does chrome yellow go brown? etc.) go unanswered. One would have thought that the time was right for a review of the information contained in Max Doerner's classic handbook. But perhaps it is later than this reviewer thinks; perhaps the very thing we should be learning at this moment is how to prepare paint from earth, blood, honey, and fish oil in case our caves too will have walls to paint on. The trouble is Dr. Herberts is not all that informative on these problems either.

Lascaux: Paintings and Engravings. By ANNETTE LAMING. *Penguin Books.* 5s. This precise description of the works in the Lascaux cave points to the presence of group compositions and thereby demolishes the theory of sympathetic magic, which depends on the supposition that the figures were painted one at a time according to the needs of the hunt. The author also argues that the unnatural association of certain animals within these deliberately conceived groups rules out the theory of an anecdotal animal art. She does not put forward a new theory, but she leaves us in no doubt that Paleolithic man was more complex than has generally been supposed.

Japanese Picture Scrolls. By ELISE GRILLI. **Hiroshige.** By TAKASHI SUZUKI. *Elek Books.* 15s. each. These are two of the first titles of a new series called "Art of the East Library." Hiroshige prints are fairly familiar to the Western public, but the new venture provides a good selection, with reproductions made in Japan; if there is a disadvantage in bringing out Hiroshige ahead of the earlier Ukiyoye artists, it is that Hiroshige, for all his attractive qualities, already shows the decline of this art, especially in his colour. The volume on Japanese picture scrolls gives some idea of their qualities, though it is perhaps impossible to reproduce in book form pictures which involve a continuous sequence of visual effects.

Classical Sinhalese Sculpture, 300 B.C.–1000 A.D. By D. T. DEVENDRA. *Tiranti.* 30s. **Minor English Wood Sculpture, 1400–1500.** By ARTHUR GARDNER. *Tiranti.* 25s. For years when Tiranti's were pioneering such underdeveloped areas as English Romanesque and the sculpture of the Ancient Orient, their "Chapters in Art" books were worth their weight in gold. Even now, these unpretentious productions hold their place. Almost amateur in their indifference to virtuosity of presentation, they are above all serviceable. Introductions are simple and compact, illustrations astonishingly numerous: Gardner's book has only about thirty fewer than the Pelican History of Mediæval Sculpture. That they are in black-and-white, small, and of variable quality is insignificant in books whose enormous virtue it is to be genuinely useful.

Kama Kala. By MULK RAJ ANAND. *Charles Skilton.* 7 gns. *Kama kala* is Sanskrit for "Erotic Art," but without the "sins-of-the-flesh" association of the English. As a religion without dogma, Hinduism never shared the Christian dualism of flesh and spirit. Parallels were often sought between sexual and religious consummation, with the result that some of the finest temple carvings were erotic.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Between the 10th and the 13th centuries A.D., especially at Khajuraho in Central India and Konarak in Orissa, treatment of the sexual act became completely frank and (under the influence of certain decadent cults) even orgiastic. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand is mainly concerned with this particular period, and this is the first time such sculptures have been properly published. In face of such an enlightened and courageous venture, it would be ungrateful to dwell on the limitations of the introduction, which is "popular" rather than scholarly. But it would have been better, perhaps, to have been frank and admitted that not all Indian erotic sculptures are good art. For instance, if Plates VIII, X, and LVI are masterpieces, then Plates XXX to XXXIV must be judged as bad art, even pornography. On the other hand, the subject is of sexological as well as æsthetic interest.

Indian Art and Heritage. Text by O. C. GANGOLY. Compiled by A. GOSWAMI. *Abelard-Schuman*. 35s. This is a popular picture book with an introduction by one of the pioneers of Indian art appreciation. Mr. Gangoly's exposure of the 19th-century detractors of Indian art and his defence of those who wrote in its favour will seem dull and laboured to the modern mind.

Modern Art in India. By AJIT MOOKERJEE. *Abelard-Schuman*. 3 gns. Only two of the established modern Indian painters are included, the remainder being comparatively young artists still building their reputations. Mr. Mookerjee's short introduction to the plates show him to be a sensitive and perceptive critic, from whom one looks forward to something more substantial. The quality of the colour plates, printing, and lay-out of this book are a notable advance on Indian standards.

The Sculpture of Africa. By ELIOT ELISOFON. *Thames & Hudson*. 70s. "Dramatic" photography and souped-up lay-out combine to produce something between a horror comic and a mail-order catalogue.

Masterpieces of European Sculpture. By ERIC NEWTON. Photographs by MARTIN HURLIMANN. *Thames & Hudson*, 3 gns. This is an anthology of fine photographs of which the earliest is from one of the Lions of Delos and the latest a bronze by Marcello Mascherini. As there are only slightly over one hundred and seventy in between, a strenuous pace is set. One could wish that the range of the book had been less wide; that it had in fact been a study of the photography of masterpieces, with fewer masterpieces and more than one photograph to each one. The general attitude behind the selection is made clear when one reaches the last few pages and finds Lehmbruck, Marcks, Marini, Greco, but neither Rosso, Matisse, Picasso, Zadkine, Arp, Lipchitz, Brancusi, nor Giacometti.

Twenty Centuries of Great European Painting. By HILTGART KELLER, BODO CICHY, and MAXIM DASIO. *Mayflower*. 130s. A fair example of the genre Picture Anthology. You get one colour plate, three half-tones, and half a page of text per artist, Lascaux to Miró in two hundred moves. A wildly

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eccentric selection is arranged in a wildly eccentric chronology. Text presents no consistent structure of ideas and because of the book's form has an unbearable monotony in relation to the plates. Plates do not invite contemplation. Everything is designed to make you turn over, read off the picture, turn again. You are guzzling chocolates and you can't get them down fast enough, especially when the end's in sight.

Art Treasures of Germany. Edited by B. Lohse and H. Busch. Text by R. Hagelstange and H. Domke. *Batsford.* 4 gns. A choice specimen of the higher forms of tourist publicity. 250 plates, mostly black-and-white, of good quality, and with captions such as "Giorgione was especially successful in creating a representative scene out of a chance situation."

Romanesque Art in Italy. By H. Decker. *Thames & Hudson.* 75s. No stylistic period is more various in its origins than the Romanesque, none presents more astonishing compounds of the decadent and the immanent. Decker is outstandingly efficient in his exposition of this complicated theme. He examines each productive centre in turn, lucidly indicating its special quality, and giving detailed notes to the plates that illustrate it. The photographs are generous in number, good to look at, present as intelligent a summary as does the text.

The Uffizi, Florence. By Filippo Rossi. *Oldbourne Press.* 35s. Giving the history of the Uffizi and a brief commentary on the provenance and subject-matter of the more important possessions, this is in fact a supremely well-prepared souvenir of the gallery. The text is too often diluted with "appreciative" platitudes (*e.g.*, Uccello "attains a complete fusion of reality and fantasy through a perfect stylisation . . ."). Otherwise it is most sensible. The best aspect of the book is the thoughtful arrangement of the plates on each page; a large coloured plate faces two or three smaller half-tones. In every instance the pictures enhance and inform each other in a positive way.

The Tate Gallery. By John Rothenstein. *Thames & Hudson.* 6 gns. This well-produced but ill-conceived book provides luxury reproductions of some 70 paintings and 40 sculptures at the Tate, and totally ignores the rest of the collection. The result might still have been tolerable if only a less middle-brow choice had been made of what to include. The text consists of a brief history of the Gallery, which is informative and entertaining, and notes on the plates, which on the whole are not.

Masters of French Painting. By Georges Besson. *Zwemmer.* 30s. A catalogue, virtually, of Braun's colour reproductions, it is slapped together with no pretence at order or sense and launched with a pretentious introduction as an answer to the call for *le Musée Imaginaire.* It is all unhappily like a *real* museum, that is to say, unintentional.

Flemish Painting: from Bosch to Rubens. By Jacques Lassaigne and Robert L. Delevoy. *Skira.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

8 gns. The Skira series aims high by the standards of most popular art books. With a comparatively short period to cover in each volume of some 200 large pages, the various authors have space to give more than the usual bare *aperçu* of their subject. Furthermore, the texts are designed to be informative, not merely chatty; they offer "history," not "appreciation." A similar intention governs the numerous plates, all in colour: a genuine effort is made to choose them well and to make them accurate. But the execution isn't up to the idea. Some of the plates are excellent, but some no better than average. As for the text, the present volume is neither silly nor banal, but it is uninspired, occasionally repetitive, and not free from errors of fact.

Flemish Painting, from Van Eyck to Breughel. By PIERRE COURTHION. *Thames & Hudson.* 18s. Presumably intended for schools. Text is concise, good on Bosch, fair on Breughel, but otherwise definitely poor. Plates (all in colour) are woolly.

Baroque Churches of Central Europe. By JOHN BOURKE. *Faber & Faber.* 36s. Most of the literature on South German, Austrian, and Swiss Baroque churches is in German, so Mr. Bourke's idea of summarising it in English was a good one. He assumes no previous knowledge on the part of the reader, his exposition is easy to follow, and his facts can be relied upon. The pity is that the book is not nearly exciting enough.

Architecture: 19th and 20th Centuries. By HENRY-RUSSELL HITCHCOCK. *Penguin Books.* 70s. A volume in the Pelican History of Art. Some of its shortcomings can be attributed to the fact that a volume treating European, North and South American, and Australian architecture is also devoted to the most complex period in the history of the art. But if the author had had six times the space, would he not merely have produced a more detailed and reticulated version of the present text and not the more generously conceived work which the subject demands? It has been called by John Summerson a masterpiece, and it is certainly true that no other man has the same amount of wide and assiduous travel behind him as the basis for this kind of combined stylistic guide and stud book. But if a masterpiece of a kind, the kind is questionable. There is no art which responds so unsatisfactorily, even if so easily, as architecture to analysis of the grammar of style, and in no other period have the technical, professional, social, and ideological conditions been more significant and more exciting. This volume is like an accomplished Pre-Raphaelite history piece, dense in its superficial detail to a point of incomprehensibility but failing to project the identity of its subject.

The Story of Modern Art. By SELDON CHENEY. *Methuen.* 45s. A reprint, revised and brought up-to-date, of a book first published in America in 1941. The author writes with the warmth and enthusiasm of a convinced popular educator; his purpose is to make modern art from Goya to Pollock available to the "form-blind." The result is vastly more readable, more open-minded and imaginative than any of its English counterparts. It is well illustrated. One hopes this book will reach many an obsessed fifth-former whose ostrich stomach would see him through the languors of its æsthetic passages.

Modern Art: A Pictorial Anthology. Edited by CHARLES MCCURDY. *Macmillan New York.* 48s. 6d. A model of how the relationship between text and illustrations should be handled. No nonsense here with full colour and fancy lay-out; commonplace half tones, four to a page, superbly selected and related to each other, presented *en bloc* at the end of each section. Here text and the massive use of illustrations really work to enrich the content of an art which to the lay eye has no content. Painting, sculpture, design, and architecture are dealt with in sections; all sections are good; Sam Hunter's (*Painting in Europe, 1850–1957*) is masterly. Adding still further to the book's outstanding usefulness is an elaborate bibliography.

Art To-day. An Introduction to the Fine and Functional Arts. By RAY FAULKNER, EDWIN ZIEGFELD, GERALD HILL. *Peter Owen.* 70s. "'Art to-day' was chosen for the title of this book because its emphasis is on the many ways in which art affects present-day living and thinking." Chatty in tone and copiously illustrated, it is mainly concerned with the applied arts. On fine art it tends to be ridiculous: *e.g.*—"This picture by Francesco Guardi ... is a literal portrayal and serves as an attractive record."

The New Graphic Art. By K. GERSTNER and M. KUTTER. *Tiranti.* £4. An interesting album of commercial graphic art dealing with posters, trade marks, advertisement lay-out, etc., in rough historical categories. A brief tri-lingual commentary discusses the status of commercial art.

The Parthenon Frieze. By D. E. L. HAYNES. Photographs by W. FORMAN. *Batchworth Press.* 18s. This would be a useful and attractive book were it not that the photographs, which appear to have been taken by flashlight and present more shadow than substance, are some of the worst illustrations of sculpture ever published.

The Mosaics in the Church of St. Mark in Venice. By PIETRO TOESCA and FERDINAND FORLATI. *Rainbird.* 7 gns. Mosaics are among the most difficult of all art media to reproduce satisfactorily in book form, since their special power, modelling, and colour effects are so largely expressed in changing play of light. Nevertheless, even as pictographs, the forty-four large colour plates in this book are superb. The introductions are models of readable scholarship.

Les Belles Heures du Duc de Berry. By JAMES J. RORIMER and MARGARET B. FREEMAN. *Thames & Hudson.* 2 gns. Thirty-two of the illuminations are reproduced in facsimile. The quality is very fine, and the book exceptional value for money.

Michelangelo: The Last Judgment. By MARGARETTA SALINGER. **Titian.** By THEODORE ROUSSEAU, JNR.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paul Cézanne. By MEYER SCHAPIRO. **Vincent Van Gogh.** By MEYER SCHAPIRO. *Beaverbrook Newspapers.* These are samples of a series not obtainable here from bookshops but only by subscription to the "*Daily Express* Art Treasures Book Club" (in New York it is published by Abrams). The covers of each volume advertise their contents with the legend, "16 Beautiful Full Colour Prints," and if the claim is somewhat forward it is also precisely just: the prints vary in their degree of faithfulness to the original—at their best they are pretty true—but as objects in themselves are nearly always convincing and harmonious—a harmony parallel to the harmony of the original (all that can be asked of a cheap reproduction). The Schapiro texts, consisting mainly of notes on the individual plates which worry the picture like a dog with an old sock, are sometimes illuminating, at others too ingenious, but are always models of how to write exoterically yet not condescendingly, and simply without oversimplifying it. The Rousseau text is a procession of agonising banalities, and Salinger's faithfully resembles a speech by the guide of a conducted tour. Members of the Club pay 15s. a month for a volume in this series plus an illustrated pamphlet on some aspect of art appreciation (the pamphlets, mostly by reputable American scholars, are goodish of their kind, but don't on the whole manage to avoid talking down; they are also too transparently slanted towards converting the reader to modern art). Even allowing for the facts that about one picture-book out of four is not a monograph but an anthology and that the anthologies (on the evidence of two of them, *British Painting* and *French Impressionists*) are thoroughly arbitrary and have uninteresting texts, this enterprise offers excellent value.

Vermeer. By LUDVIG GOLDSCHEIDER. *Phaidon.* 47s. 6d. Not a reprint of the earlier Phaidon book but a new book with excellent plates made from new photographs. Goldscheider's essay replaces the earlier one by Thomas Bodkin. It is level-headed, and admirably summarises the facts and the present state of Vermeer criticism. His catalogue, though not his proposed chronology, is the same as Gowing's, except that he includes the Dresden drawing.

Manet. By JOHN RICHARDSON. **Grünewald.** By J. K. HUYSMANS. **Dufy.** By MARCEL BRION. *Phaidon.* 18s. 6d. each. Alpha Books offer value for money on something like the generous scale that we knew with the large pre-war Phaidon Books. With eighty plates, sixteen in respectable colour, and with outstandingly informative catalogue, the Manet and Grünewald are real successes.

Monet. By ADRIAN STOKES. **Poussin.** By R. H. WILENSKI. *Faber.* 15s. each. The latest additions to the Faber Gallery. Stokes's approach to Monet is, characteristically, through "his predilection for certain shapes." He makes some penetrating observations about the relation between Monet's temperament and his style, about his "omnipotent" attitude to nature, about the situation of impressionism in the context of European painting, and all

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the argument has that quality of texture which is the mark of great criticism—that whether its immediate concern is either an artist's subject-matter or his style, it is always saying something about the other. The eight colour plates lose Monet's astringency, in fact, are downright sugary. Wilenski's text, alternating as it does between the childish (*e.g.*, Rubens is to Wagner as Poussin is to Mozart) and the uninspired (*passim*), is a puzzling affair until one arrives at the assertion (on p. 14) that Poussin was not a genius. The plates are passable, but fail to convey the unbroken continuity of the picture-surface which with Poussin is all-important.

Carpaccio. By Terisio Pignatti. **Monet.** By Leon Degand and Denis Rouart. *Zwemmer*. 45s. each. New titles in Skira's "Taste of Our Time" series. Basically the idea of the series was a good one: handy pocket books, plenty of room for an interpretative text, chronological tables and so on, a lot of pictures. The weakness has been in the *note* that Skira has struck, which is too arty by half. Every so often, however, a really useful book appears; the new Monet is one. Rouart's introduction is informative and strengthened by many quotations from Monet's correspondence. It is a pity he stressed the book's occasional nature by dwelling for so long on Monet's present reputation.

Decorative Flower Paintings. Ballet Paintings by Degas. *Oldbourne Press*. 10s. 6d. each. The six large colour plates in each of these portfolios are of a most agreeable quality, and the choice made of French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists for the flower-piece album could not have been bettered.

Van Gogh. By Frank Elgar. *Thames & Hudson*. 28s. This latest addition to an uneven series ("The World of Art") is admirable. The predominantly biographical text is lively and clear, and the translation (by James Cleugh) reads well. The illustrations, in colour and black-and-white, are very intelligently chosen and include about 100 of the drawings, well reproduced. Very good value for money.

Joseph Crawhall. By Adrian Bury, A.R.W.S. *Charles Skilton*. 5 gns. Mr. Bury believes that the Glasgow School, with which Crawhall was associated, was "the last serious and fruitful movement before art was influenced by the theories emanating from Gauguin, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, and other eccentrics." If you can go along with this, then a *de luxe* memorial to a *fin de siècle* illustrator of the wrong sort will not seem too spooky. (It must in fairness be added that Crawhall could have been better served in the selection of the plates.)

Edvard Munch: Nature and Animals. By Arve Moen. *Allen & Unwin*. 75s. It was absurd to attempt to isolate Munch's landscapes from the figures which occupy them, partly because the author is unable to find an excuse for his arbitrary procedure and partly because his search for illustrations in which the impact of the figures is weak does the artist a serious disservice.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Last Works of Henri Matisse. By PIERRE REVERDY and GEORGES DUTHUIT. (*Verve*. Vol. IX, No. 35/36) *Zwemmer*. 10 gns. The reproductions of the great *papiers collés* are so remote in scale, texture, *matière*, as to be severed from the originals. Rather they should be regarded as new lithographs, *after* the themes of the originals, to be looked at as we look at Villon's coloured etchings after Matisse, autonomous works. They do not fit into the book, occupy it as the Bonnard or the Braque drawings occupied the pages of their *Verve*. They seem to hover somewhere off the page, throbbing with energy, ready to flash out and occupy the whole room. You are left in no doubt as you turn through, exposing these springy blue acrobats, that this is not a book of reproductions but the real thing, and it almost burns your hands after you have been handling other art books.

Wassily Kandinsky: Life and Work. By WILL GROHMANN. *Thames & Hudson*. 6 gns. At the time we knew little of Kandinsky, mention of his name would bring to mind a black-and-white image of the explosive *Improvisation 30* dated 1913, which has a form rather like a gun in the right-hand corner. Other Kandinskys of the same period might have been used by anthologists if the form like a gun hadn't provided a heaven-sent example of the way creative artists are supposed to foreshadow coming events. It tended to leave us with the conviction that the more geometrical abstracts were a retreat, and the result of some fear-ridden need for tidiness, possibly induced by the horrors of World War I. Grohmann's superbly illustrated, completely documented, and absolutely indispensable study of the life and work does not shake this conviction. The many colour plates of the free improvisations painted between 1910 and 1914 run through the book like a fire, giving the later work a curiously etiolated look. And although Grohmann remains enthusiastic to the end, he refers to the article entitled "On the Question of Form" printed in the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* in 1912, as Kandinsky's "most mature contribution to the theory of art," and quotes approvingly, "Why should we narrow the range of artistic expression by the exclusive use of triangles and similar geometries?" One small point: Grohmann mentions that Kandinsky saw an exhibition of the work of Munch in Berlin in 1907, but does not speak of Munch as an influence. But is there not in Munch's long curving brush strokes, which convey an extraordinary sense of irresistible forces, a striking prefiguration of the open, unstable forms of Kandinsky's improvisations?

Picasso: His Life and Work. By ROLAND PENROSE. *Gollancz*. 25s. A note in Barr's *Picasso: Fifty Years of his Art* reads: "When asked if he had known Rilke, Picasso replied 'yes'." One feels that Mr. Penrose, too, must have received equally unilluminating replies to many of the questions he put to the master, and that there were many other questions which he didn't even dare to ask. To a great extent, he has had to rely on his survey of the work to impart interest to the changes of address, and sometimes, as in the description of still lifes painted during the Occupation, uses the pictures ingeniously

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and dramatically to cover the absence of biographical data. He is persuasive when he finds clues to the life in the work, but he is hard put to it to find clues to the work in the life, and when he comes up with one it rarely rings true. It is well known that Picasso has always preferred the company of poets to painters, and that every one of his literary friends has at one time or another called him a genius in an introduction to a picture-book, but the only vivid account of him as a human being is in Fernande Olivier's *Picasso et ses Amis*, which describes their life together from 1904 to 1914, and Mr. Penrose would have had a sharper, clearer story to tell if documents of an equal value had been available for his account of the subsequent years.

Georges Braque. By JOHN RICHARDSON. *Penguin Books.* 8s. 6d. Sensible, empirical, informative 14,000-word essay, in a somewhat naïvely didactic manner. The plates disappoint expectations aroused by the beautiful colour picture on the cover: those in colour badly lack sonority and depth, and even the black-and-whites are curiously thin and lifeless.

Kurt Schwitters in England. By STEFAN THEMERSON. *Gaberbocchus.* 25s. Presentation in a pseudo-dada format of the late work of a dadaist who turned æsthete but kept up a front of tired joking.

Zadkine. By A. M. HAMMACHER. **Despiau.** By WALDEMAR GEORGE. **Marini.** By EM. LANGUI. **Lipchitz.** By ROBERT GOLDWATER. **Hepworth.** By A. M. HAMMACHER. **Moore.** By J. P. HODIN. **Laurens.** By CECILE GOLDSCHEIDER. **Lehmbruck.** By WERNER HOFMANN. **Martini.** By G. C. ARGAN. **Gonzales.** By LEON DEGAND. *Zwemmer.* 10s. 6d. each. This paper-backed series, small enough for the overcoat pocket, is edited by A. M. Hammacher and printed in Holland. The photographs vary in quality, but the works reproduced have been well chosen and constitute a highly condensed but balanced survey of each sculptor's work. Those texts which are sensible are boring; those which are not boring are not sensible.

Fautrier. By MICHEL RAGON. **Poliakoff.** By MICHEL RAGON. *Zwemmer.* 16s. each. New titles in the "Pocket Museum" series. Gummed to nasty thick paper between pages of nasty thick print, 12 small colour plates serve the painters rather better than the reading matter.

Mass-Production of Art Books

By a Publisher

THE great problem of art-book publishing is, of course, the prohibitive cost of printing illustrations. This can be reduced, however, by more than seventy per cent, as we shall see, if an edition reaches, say, 20,000. But an edition as large as this of an art book can expect to find a satisfying sale only if it is published in several different countries and languages. This is why the "international" art book plays so dominant a rôle in art-book publishing to-day.

Among the special difficulties raised in producing this kind of book is the fact that the benefit of a long printing run is lost if the presses have to be stopped at intervals to insert new illustration-captions in different languages. The most economical solution is to number the plates and refer to a list of captions printed with the text, which means that illustrations can be printed at one time for all the foreign editions that may be required. But it has obvious disadvantages, the chief being that it encourages lack of integration between text and plates. Lack of integration is in fact one of the great weaknesses in this type of book, though it is not an inevitable result of the methods of production but rather a result of editorial shortcomings, often the effect of trying to make economies in matters other than production methods. There is not necessarily anything wrong with having the plates quite detached from the text, so long as the text is well provided with references to the plates, but in the international art book the pictures too often seem to have been amassed by someone other than the author (using perhaps material that is already to hand and too often material that is also hackneyed), and the text to have been written as a self-contained essay.

The public's appetite for pictures at present seems to be insatiable and the temptation is to include as many as possible, however irrelevant, because to be able to advertise a large number of illustrations is a potent selling-point. Especially does this apply to illustrations in colour—or "full-colour" as we delight to call it. The general reader wants colour at all costs and as he is often not familiar with the originals he is not too fussy about faithfulness. (In America, in fact, he seems to prefer his colour hotted up, and the American publisher will sometimes go so far as to varnish his plates to secure this effect.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Certainly, the exact faithfulness of colour is less important than the accuracy of the all-over effect (which can sometimes even be enhanced by unfaithfulness in detail), but in any case faithfulness is impossible as soon as there is a reduction in scale—a fact that applies much more to colour than to monochrome reproductions because small spots of colour are lost in reduction with a much more disastrous effect than similar loss of detail in monochrome. For this reason small originals and large reproductions are to be sought; and large reproductions of course mean a large format with resulting expense.

In nearly all international art books the colour plates are printed (often abroad) by the four-colour process and then cut out and tipped in; that is, the edges are cut flush and they are pasted lightly down on a blank page of the book or on a mount, at the bottom of which the caption is printed. This means that the plate can be printed separately from the caption, which provides a way other than the mere numbering of plates to get over the language difficulty, and, more important, that it can be printed in company with eight or ten others on a large sheet before being cut out. This reduces the cost per plate enormously but it naturally involves compromise over colour. In order to make colour blocks "work together" it is necessary for the engraver to allow for the use of standard inks—that is for the trichromatic yellow, blue, and red. Although theoretically these are capable in their various combinations of producing any colour whatsoever, in practice there are passages which are extremely difficult for them, and the engraver will sometimes want to alter them slightly. But this is impossible if the blocks have to work with others; and so falsification is inevitable.

IT MAY be interesting to set out some comparative figures showing the difference in the cost per copy of illustrations, in editions of 4,000 and 20,000. The figure of 4,000 has been chosen because this is a typical printing number for an art book published solely for British consumption—an average art book, that is, of fairly specialised appeal. Again, the figures are based on 64 pages because this is a convenient "working" for the printer and it is also a very usual number. Demy quarto (11¼ × 8¾ ins.) is the size chosen, because a large page is indispensable.

The costs for 4,000 sets of 64 pages of half-tone plates printed by letterpress are approximately £256 for blocks, £104 for paper, and £300 for setting and printing, which totals £660 and works out at exactly 3s. 4d. per copy.

Compare with these the corresponding figures for 20,000 sets of plates printed by gravure. The figure of 20,000 has been chosen because at that level gravure becomes much more economical than letterpress. Lithography, which costs much the same as gravure and with gravure is the process most favoured for the international art book, will compete with letterpress at a rather lower figure. But the difficulty both with gravure and lithography is the very high initial cost of plate- or cylinder-making and also a certain inflexibility which means that all the details, such as captions and margins, have to be settled at an early stage and thereafter alteration is only possible at considerable expense. Against this, both these processes use an ordinary unsurfaced paper, cheaper and pleasanter to handle than art paper.

The gravure price for 20,000 sets of 64 pages, allowing for this slightly less expensive paper, would be £900, which works out at 11d. per copy, or a quarter of the cost per copy when 4,000 sets are printed by letterpress. Such is the advantage of a larger edition.

When we come to colour reproduction the advantage is proportionately as considerable; the "run-on" price for colour printing is naturally higher than for monochrome because there are four or more colours to print instead of one. The comparable figures for 4,000 sets of 64 pages of colour printed by letterpress would be £5,070 (of which the blocks alone would cost over £3,000), or 25s. per copy. But for 20,000 sets (either by letterpress, gravure, or lithography) the cost would only be about £800 more, which brings the cost per copy down to 6s.

These figures, although they are a commonplace to the publisher, may be astonishing to the layman, however familiar with the advantages of mass-production. But mass-production, which often means a shoddy mechanical product, does not necessarily have a bad effect on reproduction. Unfortunately it rules out collotype (the finest process of all), but as far as the others are concerned it need not mean any deterioration in the hands of a good printer and, in fact, a long run with its resultant saving may encourage the publisher to spend more on the initial plate-making (afford an extra colour, for instance) with immense benefit to the work.

It only remains to find texts and illustrations that are worthy, and to find enough of them. It is the texts that are the chief problem because the collection of good illustrations in these days of brilliant photography is just too easy—but how to string those illustrations together? The temptation is to produce books that have no real homogeneity, like those which deal with some specific collection of pictures, or "histories of art," which have too wide a scope to be of any use at all. It is this sort of book which will eventually flood the market it finds so easily today. But for the more serious book in which text and pictures are truly married there will always be a public.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES & TOPICS

Leavis against Eliot

IN A RECENT number of *Commentary*, the well-known American monthly review published in New York [November 1958], Mr F. R. Leavis has at last made a turn against T. S. Eliot from which there is no retreat. He has finally—for himself—"revalued" Eliot's criticism. It is an article in which a long affair of selective homage or rather of attraction and repulsion crystallises at last into contempt. Also it is one —for which reason it deserves an examination here—curiously exceeding the better limits of critical disagreement or exchange.

A simple genuflection is first made to Eliot (in terms from Eliot), as "the man of genius who, after the long post-Swinburnian arrest, altered expression." Eliot's altered expression, in his poems, "won attention for the criticism"; and Mr. Leavis then takes a long look at "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and decides that in fact this essay, which is the leg of Eliot's critical reputation, "is notable for its ambiguities, its logical inconsequences, its pseudo-precisions, its fallaciousness, and the aplomb of its equivocations and its specious cogency."

The special stick he selects is the famous statement that "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." We are then invited to think, *per contra*, upon Tolstoy or D. H. Lawrence (mark the crescendo, as a wit observed on hearing that Ezra Pound's child was named Homer Shakespeare Pound), or Shakespeare, or George Eliot, or Mark Twain. "What pressure, what need, we ask, explains this earnestness of intellectual subtlety devoted in so strenuous a play of trenchancy, confusion, and inconsequence, to absolving the artist from the need to have lived?" Ask we may, and Mr. Leavis may ask; but exactly in what directions and how far and in what terms should he force the answer?

Suppose Mr. Leavis made the question a rhetorical one, which inferred that the artist in Mr. Eliot—or Mr. Eliot inside the critic—had not "lived." That would be fair dealing. Fair enough (perhaps) to go, as he does now and has done before, a little further, and express some doubt about Mr. Eliot's inner turmoils—to consider the essay on *Hamlet* in *The Sacred Wood*, which "reduces that tragedy to a matter of an inexpressible emotional state, one of disgust, occasioned in Hamlet by his mother," and then to ask, after various glances (including one at the relationship of Harry, in *Family Reunion*, to his creator), if in this critic there are not failures of critical intelligence caused by "a pressure of disordered inner life, of emotion he fears and distrusts and cannot understand."

Mr. Leavis jumps on. This Mr. Eliot, who does not like sex, who has attitudes towards life of "disgust and fear and rejection" (a charge Mr. Leavis first made in rebutting Eliot on Lawrence in 1934), has done so and so. In support, his so-and-sos, his acts, his misdemeanours are all paraded. His value-judgments have been shaky. He has been a disastrous judge of his contemporaries. He has backed Wyndham Lewis (to whose opinion of Mr. Eliot as a critic hiding "in a volatilised hypostasisation of his personal feelings" Mr. Leavis seems indebted), he once admitted Hugh Walpole to the *Criterion*, he found virtue in Kipling, absurdly and orthodoxly overestimated Virginia Woolf, spoke well to the French of David Garnett, and assisted unforgivably as a fairy godmother at the literary birth or christening of W. H. Auden. Given in different ways to such modish conventionality Mr. Eliot has approved Ker the scholar only because Ker belonged to "a select social-literary world," and Charles Whibley the scholar only because Whibley was "a current social literary value in an English social world of the 'best people'". And after all, even Mr. Eliot proves to have been affined to the caucus of Cambridge-Bloomsbury (in spite of backing Wyndham Lewis, who quite positively was not affined to Bloomsbury); and "Bloomsbury" also in some of their friendships were his godchildren Mr. Auden and Mr. Stephen Spender; and these younger and unworthy friends of Mr. Eliot also knew him as "Tom." And coterie defeated the desirable possibility of a critical élite; and standards were betrayed; and Mr. Eliot revised his strictures on Milton (which had been accepted by Mr. Leavis) only "for the reassurance and ingratiation of a British Academy public," and when he reprinted the revision which Mr. Leavis had criticised, he did not of course mention the criticisms of Mr. Leavis, or the name Leavis at all.

Worst of all, Lawrence, and again Lawrence. Mr. Eliot has not spoken up for Lawrence. And Cambridge-Bloomsbury (including Mr. Garnett) has not spoken up—or has not spoken up loudly enough—for Lawrence. And Wyndham Lewis did not speak up for Lawrence. And some friends and members of Cambridge-Bloomsbury were educated at Eton; and coterie and breeding

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have triumphed; and such items are all evidence for, or elements of, "the radically destructive thing" about Mr. Eliot—"that he should have fallen so short of achieving the consciousness that one thinks of as necessary to the great creative writer." He is "revalued" as more than a critic—as poet, by implication. He is a writer who has not fitted the template of personal or public behaviour constructed for him by Mr. Leavis.

In case the last should seem an unfair remark, I should say I have much sympathy with Mr. Leavis—up to a line, and in general rather than with all of his particulars. Mr. Eliot's criticism is open to criticism; and much of his attitude may fairly strike one as both comic and dismaying. And of course Mr. Leavis is right when he says that the spirit of coterie is opposed to the spirit of élite. And of course one may dislike, so far as it exists, or so far as it interferes, a social-literary Establishment. Only élites, it has escaped Mr. Leavis's attention, seldom exist in human or critical history. We may extract or construct our élites posthumously from the coteries; which are inevitable, and are apt to include in themselves good, mediocre, and bad. "Bloomsbury," so far as it was definable, has seemed to many of us (including Wyndham Lewis, who was its arch-enemy) not the least damaging of coteries, intellectually and creatively. But, to be sure, may we not extract from Bloomsbury Mr. E. M. Forster, and G. E. Moore, and even Mr. Eliot the Poet, if Mr. Leavis is correct in placing him there in years past as a member or a fellow-first-class-travelling-associate?

Not only does Mr. Leavis always expect too much of the human condition, always demand impossible perfection, and then exclaim in moral disgust when that perfection is not obtained; not only does he look for villains, and victims, and occasions to abuse: he fails as well to look strictly in his own direction, at his own expressed preferences, his own tastes, his own coterie. Of course we should like a proper "consciousness" in all critics, consciousness of their peculiar drive to subtract or to promote; we should like every critic "to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks, tares to which we are all subject, in the common pursuit of true judgment"—to quote a passage from Mr. Eliot which Mr. Leavis admired. But Mr. Leavis, if I may be allowed to say so, is not quite so interesting a figure as Mr. Eliot. Few of us have been so impelled to scrutinise him, or to examine the back numbers of *Scrutiny* for all of his own value-judgments, his own slips, his own odd assessments of the living. Yet it will be borne in upon the most casual that Mr. Leavis is no more the free critical intelligence than Mr. Eliot. The most casual reader of his books will have noticed pique, for example, and a not always very amiable or dignified lack of control over his own tares.

Would he expect one now to look closer, to reply in kind? Much as Graham Greene now proposes to write an unauthorised private life of the Sunday Irritant, John Gordon, should one reply in kind by writing a private life of Mr. Leavis? Should one enquire, in order to correct his critical deviations, into the relation of his physical stature and his psyche? I have never met Mr. Leavis; but is he tall and impressive, or short and insignificant? Is his health poor, his breath bad? Does he wear an open shirt? His pencils on the outside? Was he bullied as a child? Or snubbed as an undergraduate (see "Keynes, Lawrence, and Cambridge" in *The Common Pursuit*)?

If Bloomsbury was a compact of "gentlemen," can Mr. Leavis's clique have been composed of critics and others who feel that they are not "gentlemen"? Is Mr. Leavis thus psychologically or socially under-privileged?

If Mr. Eliot came to his conventionality from St. Louis, Mo., has Mr. Leavis come to his own set of conventions from the conventicle? As a teacher who is neither a scholar nor a "creative writer" (see "Mr. Eliot and Milton" in *The Common Pursuit*), can it be that while Mr. Leavis thinks little of scholars, he is jealous of "creative writers," who think little of him? If the fault of Mr. Eliot's criticism may be ascribed by Mr. Leavis to a sexual disgust which he postulates with a considerable impertinence in Mr. Eliot, may the absurdities of Mr. Leavis's overestimate of D. H. Lawrence be ascribed—who knows without an investigation?—to some sexual shortcoming, some special puritanism, some lack of "life" in himself, for which he seeks a cure or compensation in Lawrence, so fully "engaged in life"? Whom does Mr. Leavis call Tom, or Morgan? Who calls him Frank?

And so on, if one thought it necessary to explain that manifest degree of unconsciousness and unfreedom in Mr. Leavis's criticism, that frequent lack of pure astringency, of the properly humane and the heartfelt, which twists his attitude, or that cliché-ridden tortuosity, indeed pomposity, of a style badly imitated from Henry James, which always thickens as the pique boils up, and which does not manage to conceal in him, after all, a small mind, brooding and vengeful, and a frequent barbarity of taste.

Geoffrey Grigson

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Taste of Reality

SHELAGH DELANEY'S *A Taste of Honey* [at Wyndham's, in London] is the first English play I've seen in which a coloured man, and a queer boy, are presented as natural characters, factually, without a nudge or shudder. It is also the first play I can remember about working-class people that entirely escapes being a "working-class play": no patronage, no dogma—just the thing as it is, taken straight. In general hilarious and sardonic, the play has authentic lyrical moments arising naturally from the very situations that created the hilarity; and however tart and ludicrous, it gives a final overwhelming impression of good health—of a feeling for life that is positive, sensible, and generous.

With a small chosen range of five persons, remarkable variations are played. The mother and daughter are firmly fixed and held as absolutely central figures: their drama is the eternal struggle of the generations, and what binds them together (in spite of the irrelevancies of the three men) is their instinct for continuing life, whatever its conditions. With the men, the choice of the mother's lounge-bar lover, and of the coloured and queer boys referred to, enables the author to introduce the subsidiary themes of faded commercial love, of compulsive young animal love, and of tender but sterile love, all with assurance, tact, and skill. And because the relationships between all the five characters have been completely worked out (in so far as they appear on stage together), we even have such sub-sub-themes as the reaction of the "normal" mother to the queer boy, and of the daughter's attraction-repulsion to her mother's H-certificate Lothario.

It is, of course, wonderful that a woman of nineteen has written this play, but I must make it clear I think no note of condescension is permissible on account of Shelagh Delaney's age. The play lives in its own right entirely. It is true it is so very good one feels that the author could, at certain moments, have gone even deeper—but perhaps not without upsetting the structure, which at present exactly holds the weight of the dramatic situations. Greater depth, if necessary, will doubtless come with the next play, and the next. The only defects I could see were that the girl's mental-spiritual-physical age seemed to fluctuate a bit disturbingly (especially between scenes 1 and 2), and that the mother's solo piece on the wonder of first love verged (for an agonised moment) on the purple aria.

The play gives a great thirst for more authentic portraits of the mid-20th century English world. As one skips through contemporary novels, or scans the acreage of fish-and-chip dailies and the very square footage of the very predictable weeklies, as one blinks unbelievingly at "British" films and stares boss-eyed at the frantic race against time that constitutes the telly, it is amazing—it really is—how very little one can learn about life in England here and now. Consider only some themes suggested in *A Taste of Honey*: what have we learned, elsewhere, about working-class child-mothers, ageing semi-professional whores, the authentic agonies of homosexual love, and the new race of English-born coloured boys? Or, to consider other contemporary themes, what really revealing things have we had about the millions of teenagers, about the Teds, or about the multitudinous Commonwealth minorities in our midst—the Cypriots, the Maltese, and the several hundred thousand Pakistanis? What do we know about the new men of the 1950's—the advertising intermediaries, the television witch-doctors, and the show-business buccaneers? Has there been anything good about emblematic figures like the house-property dealers, the upstart travel agents, and the men behind the chain-stores that sell separates to the girls and Italian suitings to the boys? And most of all—most, most of all—what do we know about "uneducated" people, their daily lives, and their vast pop culture? The answer is nothing much. This last decade will be remembered as the one in which the biggest social changes happened, and the very least was discovered about them by "the arts."

I think there are two causes for this, for the rareness of Delaneys. The first is that divine curiosity seems to have deserted our writers altogether. The second and deeper reason (it probably determines the first) is that the "educated" public—the chief absorbers of "culture" above the pop level—are themselves prodigiously self-insulated against experience. In the popular phrase, they just "don't want to know." Around them seethes a great flux of bizarre new social groupings, through which they proceed, like tourists traversing the casbah, unseeing and unaware. Economic conditions are still such that it is possible for the "educated" to lead worthy and quite well-remunerated lives without having the remotest notion of what is really happening in England—let alone outside it, in its name. And the instinct not to want to know is powerfully reinforced by that blind universal faith so many educated English men and women have to-day—that if you don't look closely at what the world, near and far, is growing to be like, it somehow won't be like that at all.

"The arts" thus become, not a mirror held to nature, but a mirror that reflects simply these "arts" themselves. We have novels about books, newspapers about the press, plays about actors, films about the cinema (no, about nothing), and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

telly programmes that disclose only the internal confusions of the corporations and companies that project them. Then down from Salford comes this splendid young prophetess who, with typical good sense, calls at the right address among the conspirators in Stratford, E. 15, who then carry her voice into "the heart of Theatreland." At Wyndham's, we have been looking back with that Boy Friend for years, and the question now is whether we can see that the 1950's are so much more peculiar and disturbing than the 1920's ever weren't. As Helen and Josephine walk on to John Bury's bleak, poetic set, one glances round the stalls and holds one's breath. Are they slumming, or are they listening at last?

Colin MacInnes

Edwin Muir

IF I BEGIN by speaking of myself in this brief memoir of Edwin Muir it is because I was always aware of a deep affinity of origins and experience, and this may be my best qualification for writing about such a man. We had both been born on remote farms, and though Orkney is a long way from North-East Yorkshire, they were both Viking or Scandinavian settlements and the place-names that echoed in our infant ears have a striking similarity: Wyre and Wass, Ness and Garth. In the farmyard our sensibilities had been assailed by the same elemental sights and smells, though I had no experience of the sea. The parallel does not end with childhood. At the age of fifteen we had both gone to large industrial cities to become clerks at the same salary of four shillings and twopence a week. But then after a few years our careers began to diverge. Muir's experience in Glasgow was grim, and lasted for eighteen years; mine in Leeds was genteeler and lasted for only three years. I was ambitious and resolved to better myself. Muir remained unambitious to the end of his life, and more reluctantly than anyone I have ever known had his greatness thrust upon him.

During our youth we had experienced the same intellectual excitements, acquiring our knowledge from public libraries and cheap books bought with the few pennies we managed to save. We were both swept away by Nietzsche, who became the guide to our further education. We both became interested in Guild Socialism, read *The New Age*, and eventually contributed to its pages. We both came under the influence of its editor, A. R. Orage—a man of great intelligence and intuitive understanding, who naturally attracted disciples, as Muir said of him. But there the parallel ends, for the First World War had meanwhile broken out and I was swept into it. Muir escaped because his physique was not equal to it. It plays little part in his *Autobiography*, whereas in my life it is the watershed that divides innocence from experience, faith from disillusion, hope from frustration. For this reason Muir could always attend and listen to a class of experiences to which the war had left me sardonically indifferent. He describes these experiences in his autobiography:

> The experiences I mean are of little practical use and have no particular economic or political interest. They come when I am least aware of myself as a personality moulded by my will and time; in moments of contemplation when I am unconscious of my body, or indeed that I have a body with separate members; in moments of grief or prostration; in happy hours with friends; and, because self-forgetfulness is most complete then, in dreams and daydreams and in that floating, half-discarnate state which precedes and follows sleep. In these hours there seems to me to be knowledge of my real self and simultaneously knowledge of immortality.

I have never had such experiences and to me a belief in immortality remains in substance a convenient myth.

In discussing Orage, and contrasting him with another friend who was very close to him, Muir draws a distinction between a personality, such as Orage was, and what after Goethe he can only call a "nature."

> A personality is too obviously the result of a collaboration between its owner and Time, too clearly *made*; and no matter how fascinating or skilful the workmanship may be, ultimately it bores us. Orage was much more than a personality, but he kept that "more" to himself as if jealously guarding his real strength, and it was his personality that he turned to the world; he was too proud of it. Holms had hardly any personality at all; when he impressed you it was by pure, uncontaminated power.... To show the irreducible second-rateness of a man of personality one has only to think of Holms's words in his letter to Hugh Kingsmill: "The supreme height of individual self-expression, and union with the universe, are one." If the soul is immortal and the personality is not, obviously our real task is not to cultivate but to get rid of personality.

This distinction is a clue to Muir's own life, which was so gentle and self-effacing, and impressed his friends with almost a sense of holi-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness. His poetry is unified by this quality in his character and experience. Muir did not begin to write poetry until he was thirty-five, and the public has been slow to recognise its virtues. It is not the poetry of any school; its diction is cautious and unassertive. Nevertheless it progressed intensively and is now a body of verse that challenges comparison with the work of any of his contemporaries. In historical perspective it may seem to be the natural continuation of the poetry of Yeats.

In our present state of deprivation we must guard against sentimental exaggeration. Muir rarely conveys the immediate excitement that we associate with the later Yeats, nor does he evoke our spiritual predicament with the vivid poignancy of the early Eliot. He is not a magical poet; sometimes he is pedestrian. But if he is pedestrian he is always marching on the fixed point of a precise vision, and his poetry is therefore accumulative in its force; one has to read it as one reads a Book of Hours, or a chain of meditations. Perhaps the *Centuries* of Traherne is the nearest comparison, and we know that Muir had a great fondness for Traherne. Muir's is not metaphysical poetry, in the academic sense; it is not conceitful. The imagery is bland, the metaphors simple and not contrived. Sometimes, as in "The Horses," the imagination is Yeatsian in its cosmic scope; but more often it is humble, of conversational ease, as in George Herbert:

They could not tell me who should be my lord,
But I could read from every word they said
The common thought: Perhaps that lord was dead
And only a story now and a wandering word.
How could I follow a word or serve a fable,
They asked me. "Here are lords a'plenty. Take
Service with one, if only for your sake;
Yet better be your own master, if you're able."

I would rather scour the roads, a masterless dog,
Than take such service, be a public fool,
Obstreperous or tongue-tied, a good rogue,
Than be with those, the clever and the dull,
Who say that lord is dead; when I can hear
Daily his dying whisper in my ear.

Such simplicity easily falls into banality; but it can also rise into the purest beauty, as it does in "Day and Night," especially in this first verse:

I wrap the blanket of the night
About me, fold on fold on fold—
And remember how as a child
Lost in the newness of the light
I first discovered what is old
From the night and the soft night wind.
For in the daytime all was new,
Moving in light and in the mind
All at once, thought, shape, and hue.
Extravagant novelty too wild
For the new eyes of a child.

The sentiment is not original—it is Traherne's; and the opening metaphor is a Yeatsian cliché; yet how naturally, and how inevitably the accents fall.

I think there is another poet who must have influenced Muir, though I do not remember any reference to him—Coventry Patmore. There are certain later poems, such as "The Late Wasp" and "The Late Swallow," that have Patmore's well-wrought cadence; but the comparison ends on the technical level—no two poets could have had such different "natures."

The *Collected Poems* will have to be revised now, and brought to a sad conclusion. May we hope also for a volume of Collected Essays? This, too, would be impressive. Again of no school, grinding no academic axe, the criticism is yet firm and profound, and of remarkable range. There must be many scattered essays that have never been republished; I remember one that impressed me very much at the time of its publication on "Calvin and Marx." Muir was not politically-minded. I like to think that he was a fellow anarchist.

> What I believe in is a modest, peaceable life in this world, a faulty, forgiving, on the whole happy life, where no man can exploit his neighbour and people work together in a friendly way and die when their time comes; a life which cannot be right unless its relation to the heavens is right. It is the universal frame over-arching and embracing everything that gives meaning and proportion to the whole.

In all his work, especially his poetry, Muir was obsessed with Time. In the "Extracts from a Diary" printed at the end of *The Story and the Fable* (the original version of *An Autobiography*), he describes this obsession humorously:

> I was born before the Industrial Revolution, and am now about two hundred years old. But I have skipped a hundred and fifty of them. I was really born in 1737, and till I was fourteen no time-accidents happened to me. Then in 1751 I set out from Orkney to Glasgow. When I arrived I found it was not 1751, but 1901, and that a hundred and fifty years have been burned up in my two days' journey. But I myself was still in 1751, and remained there for a long time. All my life I have been trying to overhaul that invisible leeway.

Edwin Muir has now caught up with time and for him the riddle is solved: he is at peace. He found the perfect expression of his faith (he disclaimed the word philosophy) in the *Upanishads*, in the doctrine of the Self—the Self "that is not known through discourse, splitting of hairs, learning however great. He comes to the man He loves; takes that man's body as His own. . . ."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A soft breeze stirs and all my thoughts are blown
Far out to sea and lost. Yet I know well
The bloodless word will battle for its own
Invisibly in brain and nerve and cell.
The generations tell
Their personal tale: the One has far to go
Past the mirages and the murdering snow.

To proclaim the victory of the bloodless word is an act of faith; it is to assert the superiority of the *vita contemplativa* in a world devoted to meaningless work and desperate erethism. Muir's significance is the significance of a dedicated man of letters, and his life of devotion is a silent criticism not only of the conventional notion of success (which confuses art with entertainment), but also of those more professional betrayals which take the form of wilful eccentricity, academic conceit, or intellectual snobbery (as Mr. Cyril Connolly would say, "he never belonged to the literary élite").

I do not think Muir felt very optimistic about the survival of his values in our doomed civilisation. But his imagination reached beyond this historical moment, to the cosmic revolution that astrologers predict, that Yeats saw in vision, and that even to more rational philosophers now seems inevitable and imminent.

Herbert Read

On a Book Entitled "Lolita"

By Vladimir Nabokov

AFTER doing my impersonation of suave John Ray, the character in *Lolita* who pens the Foreword, any comments coming straight from me may strike one—may strike me, in fact—as an impersonation of Vladimir Nabokov talking about his own book. A few points, however, have to be discussed; and the autobiographic device may induce mimic and model to blend.

Teachers of Literature are apt to think up such problems as "What is the author's purpose?" or still worse "What is the guy trying to say?" Now, I happen to be the kind of author who in starting to work on a book, has no other purpose than to get rid of that book and who, when asked to explain its origin and growth, has to rely on such ancient terms as Inter-reaction of Inspiration and Combination—which, I admit, sounds like a conjurer explaining one trick by performing another.

The first little throb of *Lolita* went through me late in 1939 or early in 1940, in Paris, at a time when I was laid up with a severe attack of intercostal neuralgia. As far as I can recall, the initial shiver of inspiration was somehow prompted by a newspaper story about an ape in the Jardin des Plantes who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: this sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage. The impulse I record had no textual connection with the ensuing train of thought, which resulted, however, in a prototype of my present novel, a short story some thirty pages long. I wrote it in Russian, the language in which I had been writing novels since 1924 (the best of these are not translated into English, and all are prohibited for political reasons in Russia). The man

TOO much about LOLITA? *Almost everybody has had a say about the novel except the author himself. Some years ago in New York, after the manuscript (in the form of quasi-smuggled copies of the two-volume paper-backed Paris edition) had gone rapidly, nervously, uncertainly from hand to hand in the Manhattan publishing world, I asked Vladimir Nabokov for permission to publish long excerpts from the novel in a number of the* ANCHOR REVIEW. *He agreed, and agreed too, after much reluctance (his) and prodding (mine), to do a personal essay "on a book entitled* LOLITA. . . ." *The English publishers intend to include this in their forthcoming edition (if and when), and we offer it here as a contribution, at long last, by the author himself to the curious local controversy, that strange "battle of the books" with the books left out.*—M.J.L.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a Central European, the anonymous nymphet was French, and the loci were Paris and Provence. I had him marry the little sick girl's mother who soon died, and after a thwarted attempt to take advantage of the orphan in a hotel room, Arthur (for that was his name) threw himself under the wheels of a truck. I read the story one blue-paper wartime night to a group of friends—Mark Aldanov, two social revolutionaries, and a woman doctor; but I was not pleased with the thing and destroyed it sometime after moving to America in 1940.

Around 1949, in Ithaca, upstate New York, the throbbing, which had never quite ceased, began to plague me again. Combination joined inspiration with fresh zest and involved me in a new treatment of the theme, this time in English—the language of my first governess in St. Petersburg, circa 1903, a Miss Rachel Home. The nymphet, now with a dash of Irish blood, was really much the same lass, and the basic marrying-her-mother idea also subsisted; but otherwise the thing was new and had grown in secret the claws and wings of a novel.

THE book developed slowly, with many interruptions and asides. It had taken me some forty years to invent Russia and Western Europe, and now I was faced by the task of inventing America. The obtaining of such local ingredients as would allow me to inject a modicum of average "reality" (one of the few words which mean nothing without quotes) into the brew of individual fancy, proved at fifty a much more difficult process than it had been in the Europe of my youth when receptiveness and retention were at their automatic best. Other books intervened. Once or twice I was on the point of burning the unfinished draft and had carried my Juanita Dark as far as the shadow of the leaning incinerator on the innocent lawn, when I was stopped by the thought that the ghost of the destroyed book would haunt my files for the rest of my life.

Every summer my wife and I would go butterfly hunting. The specimens are deposited at scientific institutions, such as the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard or the Cornell University collection. The locality labels pinned under these butterflies will be a boon to some 21st-century scholar with a taste for recondite biography. It was at such of our headquarters at Telluride, Colorado; Afton, Wyoming; Portal, Arizona; and Ashland, Oregon, that *Lolita* was energetically resumed in the evenings or on cloudy days. I finished copying the thing out in longhand in the spring of 1954, and at once began casting around for a publisher.

At first, on the advice of a wary old friend, I was meek enough to stipulate that the book be brought out anonymously. I doubt that I shall ever regret that soon afterwards, realising how likely a mask was to betray my own cause, I decided to sign *Lolita*. The four American publishers, W, X, Y, Z, who in turn were offered the typescript and had their readers glance at it, were shocked by *Lolita* to a degree that even my wary old friend F.P. had not expected.

WHILE it is true that in ancient Europe, and well into the 18th century (obvious examples come from France), deliberate lewdness was not inconsistent with flashes of comedy, or vigorous satire, or even the verve of a fine poet in a wanton mood, it is also true that in modern times the term "pornography" connotes mediocrity, commercialism, and certain strict rules of narration. Obscenity must be mated with banality because every kind of æsthetic enjoyment has to be entirely replaced by simple sexual stimulation which demands the traditional word for direct action upon the patient. Old rigid rules must be followed by the pornographer in order to have his patient feel the same security of satisfaction as, for example, fans of detective stories feel—stories where, if you do not watch out, the real murderer may turn out to be, to the fan's disgust, artistic originality (who for instance would want a detective story without a single dialogue in it?). Thus, in pornographic novels, action has to be limited to the copulation of clichés. Style, structure, imagery should never distract the reader from his tepid lust. The novel must consist of an alternation of sexual scenes. The passages in between must be reduced to sutures of sense, logical bridges of the simplest design, brief expositions and explanations, which the reader will probably skip but must know they exist in order not to feel cheated (a mentality stemming from the routine of "true" fairy tales in childhood). Moreover, the sexual scenes in the book must follow a crescendo line, with new variations, new combinations, new sexes, and a steady increase in the number of participants (in a Sade play they call the gardener in), and therefore the end of the book must be more replete with lewd lore than the first chapters.

Certain techniques in the beginning of *Lolita* (Humbert's Journal, for example) misled some of my first readers into assuming that this was going to be a lewd book. They expected the rising succession of erotic scenes; when these stopped, the readers stopped, too, and felt bored and let down. This, I suspect, is one of the reasons why not all the four firms read the typescript to the end. Whether they found it pornographic or not did not interest me. Their refusal to buy the book was based not on my treatment

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the theme but on the theme itself, for there are at least three themes which are utterly taboo as far as most American publishers are concerned. The two others are: a Negro-White marriage which is a complete and glorious success resulting in lots of children and grandchildren; and the total atheist who lives a happy and useful life, and dies in his sleep at the age of 106.

Some of the reactions were very amusing: one reader suggested that his firm might consider publication if I turned my Lolita into a twelve-year-old lad and had him seduced by Humbert, a farmer, in a barn, amidst gaunt and arid surroundings, all this set forth in short, strong, "realistic" sentences ("He acts crazy. We all act crazy, I guess. I guess God acts crazy." Etc.). Although everybody should know that I detest symbols and allegories (which is due partly to my old feud with Freudian voodooism and partly to my loathing of generalisations devised by literary mythists and sociologists), an otherwise intelligent reader who flipped through the first part described *Lolita* as "Old Europe debauching young America," while another flipper saw in it "Young America debauching old Europe." Publisher X, whose advisers got so bored with Humbert that they never got beyond page 188, had the naïveté to write me that Part Two was too long. Publisher Y, on the other hand, regretted that there were no good people in the book. Publisher Z said if he printed *Lolita* he and I would go to jail.

NO WRITER in a free country should be expected to bother about the exact demarcation between the sensuous and the sensual; this is preposterous; I can only admire but cannot emulate the accuracy of judgment of those who pose the fair young mammals photographed in magazines where the general neckline is just low enough to provoke a past master's chuckle and just high enough not to make a postmaster frown. I presume there exist readers who find titillating the display of mural words in those hopelessly banal and enormous novels which are typed out by the thumbs of tense mediocrities and called "powerful" and "stark" by the reviewing hack. There are gentle souls who would pronounce *Lolita* meaningless because it does not teach them anything. I am neither a reader nor a writer of didactic fiction, and, despite John Ray's assertion, *Lolita* has no moral in tow. For me a work of fiction exists only in so far as it affords me what I shall bluntly call æsthetic bliss, that is a sense of being somehow, somewhere, connected with other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm. There are not many such books. All the rest is either topical trash or what some call the Literature of Ideas, which very often is topical trash coming in huge blocks of plaster that are carefully transmitted from age to age until somebody comes along with a hammer and takes a good crack at Balzac, at Gorki, at Mann.

Another charge which some readers have made is that *Lolita* is anti-American. This is something that pains me considerably more than the idiotic accusation of immorality. Considerations of depth and perspective (a suburban lawn, a mountain meadow) led me to build a number of North American sets. I needed a certain exhilarating milieu. Nothing is more exhilarating than philistine vulgarity. But in regard to philistine vulgarity there is no intrinsic difference between Palearctic manners and Nearctic manners. Any proletarian from Chicago can be as bourgeois (in the Flaubertian sense) as a duke. I chose American motels instead of Swiss hotels or English inns only because I am trying to be an American writer and claim only the same rights that other American writers enjoy. On the other hand, my creature Humbert is a foreigner and an anarchist, and there are many things, besides nymphets, in which I disagree with him. And all my Russian readers know that my old worlds—Russian, British, German, French—are just as fantastic and personal as my new one is.

Lest the little statement I am making here seem an airing of grudges, I must hasten to add that besides the lambs who read the typescript of *Lolita* or its Olympia Press edition in a spirit of "Why did he have to write it?" or "Why should I read about maniacs?" there have been a number of wise, sensitive, and staunch people who understood my book much better than I can explain its mechanism here.

EVERY serious writer, I dare say, is aware of this or that published book of his as of a constant comforting presence. Its pilot light is steadily burning somewhere in the basement and a mere touch applied to one's private thermostat instantly results in a quiet little explosion of familiar warmth. This presence, this glow of the book in an ever accessible remoteness is a most companionable feeling, and the better the book has conformed to its prefigured contour and colour the ampler and smoother it glows. But even so, there are certain points, by-roads, favourite hollows that one evokes more eagerly and enjoys more tenderly than the rest of one's book. I have not reread *Lolita* since I went through the proofs in the winter of 1954 but I find it to be a delightful presence now that it quietly hangs about the house like a summer day which one knows to be bright behind the haze. And when I thus think of *Lolita*, I seem

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always to pick out for special delectation such images as Mr. Taxovich, or that class list of Ramsdale School, or Charlotte saying "waterproof," or Lolita in slow motion advancing towards Humbert's gifts, or the pictures decorating the stylised garret of Gaston Godin, or the Kasbeam barber (who cost me a month of work), or Lolita playing tennis, or the hospital at Elphinstone, or pale, pregnant, beloved, irretrievable Dolly Schiller dying in Gray Star (the capital town of the book), or the tinkling sounds of the valley town coming up the mountain trail (on which I caught the first known female of *Lycaeides sublivens* Nabokov). These are the nerves of the novel. These are the secret points, the sublimal co-ordinates by means of which the book is plotted—although I realise very clearly that these and other scenes will be skimmed over or not noticed, or never even reached, by those who begin reading the book under the impression that it is something on the lines of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* or *Les Amours de Milord Grosvit*. That my novel does contain various allusions to the physiological urges of a pervert is quite true. But after all we are not children, not illiterate juvenile delinquents, not English public school boys who after a night of homosexual romps have to endure the paradox of reading the Ancients in expurgated versions.

It is childish to study a work of fiction in order to gain information about a country or about a social class or about the author. And yet one of my very few intimate friends, after reading *Lolita,* was sincerely worried that I (I!) should be living "among such depressing people"—when the only discomfort I really experienced was to live in my workshop among discarded limbs and unfinished torsos.

AFTER Olympia Press, in Paris, published the book, an American critic suggested that *Lolita* was the record of my love affair with the romantic novel. The substitution "English language" for "romantic novel" would make this elegant formula more correct. But here I feel my voice rising to a much too strident pitch. None of my American friends have read my Russian books and thus every appraisal on the strength of my English ones is bound to be out of focus. My private tragedy, which cannot, and indeed should not, be anybody's concern, is that I had to abandon my natural idiom, my untrammelled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English, devoid of any of those apparatuses—the baffling mirror, the black velvet backdrop, the implied associations and traditions—which the native illusionist, frac-tails flying, can magically use to transcend the heritage in his own way.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thomas Wolfe and the Kicking Season

By Pamela Hansford Johnson

To nearly every successful and serious writer, either during his lifetime or within a short period after it, there comes the Kicking Season. This is not arranged or concerted by villains in committee; it just happens because something is abroad in the air, a sense that it is high time somebody got his come-uppance, was "reappraised," or simply, in his own best interests, given a temporary check. I remember it happening to Hemingway when *Across the River and Into the Trees* came out. I detected a faint whiff of it—very faint—over Mr. Eliot's last play. The higher they rise.... Yes, one day it will even be the turn of Scott Fitzgerald. Even of Mr. E. M. Forster. At the moment, it is the turn of poor Tom Wolfe.

"This man is not a novelist," wrote Mr. Cyril Connolly, on September 14th last, when a new edition of *Look Homeward Angel* and Wolfe's *Selected Letters* were issued together,* "he is an obsessional neurotic with a gift for words who could write only about himself and who cannot create other people. He is the Benjamin Robert Haydon of American literature." The late Edwin Muir headed his article, "The Pretender," and wrote, "His novels have become almost unreadable," quoting, to prove it, a good deal of Wolfe's old nonsense and little of his excellence. In the whole of *Look Homeward Angel* he found only one convincing character, "Elizabeth Gant." It is odd to see her as Elizabeth. She was Eliza to us.

By "us," I mean a group of young men and girls at the beginning of the 'thirties, either just within or just out of their teens, reared in a London suburb, good grammar school products, liking to roll back the carpet in the evenings and dance, and to flow through successive crazes for successive writers. What writers? Well, there was a long run on Dostoievsky; on O'Flaherty: a short but (for me) painful one on Nietzsche: and then, one day, *Look Homeward Angel* burst upon us like the radiance from a lighthouse newly erected upon some very sticky rocks. We ate, drank, and dreamed it. We weren't fools. We had some taste, we knew that some of it was guff. The apostrophes of Eugene to Ann, that "great big beautiful Boston bitch," made us wriggle. But that book spoke for us: spoke, not in spite of its sprawlings, its bawlings, its youthful yellings and howlings about the family, the silver cord, the "incommunicable prison of this earth," love itself, but because of those things. We were not articulate ourselves, though we had much we wanted to say. Wolfe had far too much to say, but he said it with our voices.

In the *Manchester Guardian* of October 3rd last, Mrs. Doris Lessing, that soberly diagnostic critic, wrote with her usual sense, her usual lack of flummery, that Wolfe was a myth-maker: "He did not write *about* adolescence: to read him is to re-experience adolescence.... I have yet to meet a person born into any kind of Establishment who understood Wolfe, I have yet to meet a provincial who has cracked open a big city who does not acknowledge that Wolfe expressed his own struggle for escape into larger experience."

And there you have it, pat: "the *whole* thing," as Starwick would have said.

For it is no good denying one's enthusiasms, once they have been excited. There must have been something to back them, in proportion to their violence. These boys and girls I have spoken of didn't even mind the rhetoric—"O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again..."—and it was encouraging to me to find a positive response to this threnody by an otherwise stern young man in *Granta*, at the end of last year. So he should respond, unless he were dead already. We did. We couldn't help it.

The Times Literary Supplement, in an excellent middle article, paid Wolfe the tribute of taking him seriously, and praising where praise was due. This mentioned his "gift of mimicry"

* *Look Homeward Angel.* By Thomas Wolfe. Heinemann. 21s. *Selected Letters of Thomas Wolfe*, edited, with an Introduction by Elizabeth Nowell. Heinemann, 25s

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(first-class, by the way), and his masterly ability to transfer the flavour of a person to the printed page. The writer also, and this was salutary, reminded us of Faulkner's almost wildly generous praise of Wolfe. He "put Wolfe first" among his contemporaries: "We all fail, but Wolfe made the best failure because he tried hardest to say the most." Mr. Faulkner is not an ass. He would not have been so carried away by a writer who was an ass—utterly.

Because the assish side of Wolfe is indisputable, and the *Selected Letters* make it worse. Such Pecksniffery! (Though we should have guessed it from Eugene's absurd farewell to Starwick in *Of Time and the River*.) So many gentle, mellifluous, seeping openings, full of love, to letters that degenerate into sadic abuse. All the worst of Wolfe is in his letter to some poor girl brought along to him at Harvard, whom he found somewhat loose; in his letter to the "Ann" of *Of Time and the River*, mulling over the Ann-Eleanor-Starwick rumpus in Paris; in the disgraceful letter refusing to allow *I Have a Thing to Tell You* to be translated into Yiddish, on the grounds that it wasn't really political at all and he couldn't have it used to political ends. All the best of Wolfe is in the letters of travel, in particular the letter about Hungary which he wrote to Aline Bernstein.

A surprising number of contemporary critics approve the letters and reject the novel. This I fail to understand. The same man wrote both. Out of the stuff, both splendid and repulsive, of these letters, came the novels. I am, of course, biased. In 1947 I published a short critical book on Wolfe. I would stand by all in it that is essential: I would like to modify some apologetic passages which apologise for nothing, and certainly explain nothing away. But while I was writing it I was carried along by the Tom Wolfe who meant so much to me when I was young; and now that I am not so young, I can still reread the best of him and know that the best was pretty good.

Shortly after the book appeared in America I received a fascinating letter from a lady who had known him well. She began: "You must realise that Tom was never the same after he was kicked on the head by a horse."

Owing to a gross mischance, that letter was mislaid somewhere on the premises of the National Book League, and I have lost the address of the writer. There is so much I want to know. What horse? And, perhaps more pertinently, when?

For there was always something kickable, or already kicked, about Wolfe. If it wasn't horses, it was critics. His hugeness of body and intention invited it: and he shrank from the hoof like a sea-anemone from a proffered stone. Poor chap, we all take it hard, but, like Mrs. Gummidge (and there is a great deal of Mrs. Gummidge in Tom) he took it worst.

WOLFE had almost all the virtues of the major novelist except good taste and power of organisation; Good taste, of course, is a virtue easily overrated: Balzac was not conspicuous for it, and remains one of the greatest of all novelists. Organisational power, however, is essential if taste is lacking; and after *Look Homeward Angel* Wolfe gave up any attempt to organise whatsoever. Furthermore, he was not intellectual in the sense that Proust, James, Tolstoy, were. In their sense Dickens, of course, was not, and nor was Balzac: but both were magnificent organisers of their material, and if a writer is to succeed with only a middling intellectual equipment he must be able to organise, or he is up against it.

What Wolfe had, however, was the splendid capacity to lend dignity and marmoreal stature to the fact of being young. Aldous Huxley succeeded by flattering the youth of his day. The young people who loved him were not (they knew) as clever as he; but he held out the hope that if they used their brains hard enough they might one day hope to respond to him on more or less equal terms. He did not speak as one of them: but he never talked down. Wolfe spoke from among them: he was a great, bossy, tormented voice in their crowd. He spoke for them: they cried Hooray. Out of their dumb, secreted music he made a big noisy song.

That was his main contribution to the novel; he was, as Mrs. Lessing says, a myth-maker. In his gigantic person he embodied the entire myth of his time. She observes also:

> He was . . . packed with prejudices. Any thing or person alien to him was an enemy. His attitudes towards Negroes and Jews were crudely instinctual. Some of his ideas about women were juvenile. He hated and loved like a child, according to whether or not he was loved and accepted. He had no notion of politics at all. . . .

It is perfectly true. He was not only an adolescent like us: he was a sillier adolescent. We loved him because he spoke for us and because he was an artist; but we didn't feel the need to look up to him. We had more sense. And we felt the warmer to him because he had less than we.

If the word "artist" has any meaning at all, of course Wolfe was one. He did not know how to order the whole of his vast material, but he did know how to turn a death in the family, a humiliation in love, into art. I cannot conceive how anyone can read of the death of Ben Gant, the episodes with Abe Jones at N.Y.U., the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nightmare quartet in Paris, Eugene, Eleanor, Ann, and Starwick, the first excitement of prowling the book-stacks at Harvard, without accepting the fact. I wrote in my own book: "There are three deaths in literature comparable for power and pity and horror with the death of Ben: the death of Oliver Gant, in *Of Time and the River*, of the father in Roger Martin du Gard's *Les Thibault*, and of the grandmother in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The nervous strain of it, the appalling grief, and above all the pervasive *bad temper* are suggested with an extraordinary nakedness and force."

I don't feel like going back on that. The scene is wonderful because it is autobiography, because it is personally felt: but art has arranged it. After all, the majority of mankind manage to feel. Only a small number can convey their emotions to others.

The trouble with Wolfe now is that he runs counter to anything we have learned recently to respect. He is pre-eminently Bad Form—or would be if he had a form. He is politically reprehensible—or would be if he had any coherent politics. He throws up bizarre additional difficulties by his hidden ambivalence. In *Look Homeward Angel* we have the romanticised figure of Laura James, the moonlight-and-roses woven about her. But what is she beside the love-figure of Francis Starwick? And again, what is Starwick's stature in relation to that of Esther Jack, in the last two novels? Greater? or less? How far did Wolfe understand himself? Less, I should say, than a serious novelist must. Yet he was profoundly serious in intention. I believe he had more of the gifts of the great novelist than any American of his century: but failed because his flaws were insufficiently compensated.

We all value the organised intellect. We properly turn from the intellect totally out of control (Frederick Rolfe) and from the control without intellect (no names, no pack-drill). But we find it hard to look at Wolfe straight, or settle our energies to discovering where he was in full control of his artistic material, and what, at best, he made of it. The *Selected Letters*, however fine some of them may be, can do him no good. For here is Wolfe screaming and howling at his worst, patronising and sermonising at his worst, biting, at his worst, the hands that fed him. The fact that many of these letters remained unposted is significant enough. Wolfe was sufficiently in control of his material, in the physical sense, not to drop it in the pillar-box. The story of his novels is in them, but it is not the story as he finally wrote it. He chose to write it better.

Are Wolfe's faults finally destructive, denying him a serious position in American literature? There is no doubt they are pretty bad. At his very worst, he makes one blush; but there is much to blush at in Balzac too (only *he* would have put a pirate with a grand piano into a story so psychologically subtle as *Une Femme de Trente Ans*), and not a little in Lawrence: the Natcha-Kee-Tawara tribe in *The Lost Girl* is only just bearable. Is Wolfe's intellectual immaturity intolerable? It is true that as we get older, so we increasingly dislike being shouted at. Can we write him off because we don't know, in *Of Time and the River*, *The Web and the Rock*, *You Can't Go Home Again*, how much of such organisation as there is, is due to him, and how much to Maxwell Perkins and Aswell? Can we no longer bear the rhetoric? For my part, I should like to see some return to it in our writing. We have thrown it out entirely have left ourselves the drier and the more brittle. Dickens' rhetoric was not infrequently one of his most vitalising factors, and Proust ("*O grandes attitudes de l'Homme et de la Femme* ...") used it like song, when there was a time for song. Perhaps we can no longer bear *Wolfe's* rhetoric? Well, some of it is splendid, and the rest not much worse than better writers have got away with.

I AM inclined to think that, so far as he is concerned, this is *merely* a Kicking Season, and not a definite reappraisal. What we shall have to do, eventually, is to sort Wolfe down. We must sort him down in our own minds while we read him, even as we sort Balzac down, accepting the work as a whole (because both the good and the bad make up the whole of any writer), while keeping our own reservations. Wolfe came nearer than any other writer to producing the "Great American Novel" in its mythopoeic sense. His is a young book risen out of a young culture; it attempts too much, just as he, poor devil, attempted too much when he tried to read all at once all the books ever written. But William Faulkner must still have the last word on him. What he said may have been the overspill of an enormous impulse of generosity: yet he meant it at the time, as we who were young when the 'thirties began meant our enthusiasm at the time. And such praise, such grateful affection, doesn't spring out of nothing. Wolfe, at times, writes like Hell or James Joyce. At others, he writes like a great novelist. How many writers can do as much?

There is somebody else who writes at times like a great novelist, and that is James Hanley. But he has never had a Kicking Season—(*a*) because he has never had a season of assured success, and (*b*) because when *he* writes badly, he doesn't offend the taste, he doesn't raise the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blush, he isn't rowdy, he isn't silly: he is just glum and dull. Hanley and Wolfe both have qualities of greatness—very different ones; and wrecking qualities—very different ones. Both have a vast sense of *scale*, both think big. One made a lot of money, one can't have made much. Yet the critical intelligence which can write either off as negligible defeats me. As I have said, I would not apologise for the worst of Wolfe as I apologised for it ten years ago. I do not feel, as Mr. Connolly does, that he would have improved had he lived. I think he would have got much, much worse. In any case, his young death was an essential part of his work: I don't know how he managed to see it coming (*"Something has spoken to me in the night and told me I must die"*) but he did. Such organisational powers as he had were gone. Such intellectual detachment as he had, was gone. His work was left in chaos, he had seen the world as chaos. Romantically Germanophile, only in part disillusioned by Martha Dodd, he could not have faced the new war. He must be judged on what he has left, and no excuses should be made for him. He would have hated them, and would have reacted, I have no doubt, in letters of really appalling Pecksniffery.

"Do not suppose that your kind review, your really *great* review, of my work gave me aught but pleasure. You are too fine a person, I know, too generous a person, to have written out of anything that was not honest and big.... If I say that you disgust me, that for a whole night and day I could not bear to turn my eyes to where the magazine lay which contained your 'appraisal,' you will realise that I say it only as a friend, in the hope that you may some day come to realise..." etcetera, etcetera.

Something like that.

On the Rightness of Mr. Berlin

Two Concepts of Liberty. By Isaiah Berlin. *Oxford University Press.* 5s.

This fifty-seven-page pamphlet is the text of the lecture Sir Isaiah Berlin (hereafter to be referred to simply as "Mr. Berlin," gave last fall at Oxford on assuming the Chichele Chair of Social and Political Theory. It is the latest in the series of tracts for the times—others were *The Hedgehog and the Fox* and *Historical Inevitability*—with which Mr. Berlin has been demonstrating the case for a sceptical and pluralistic approach and against the faith-full monism which is still strong in our age. It is a necessary and important work, and Mr. Berlin has been performing it with brilliance, wit, and imagination.

The two concepts of liberty—or freedom (he uses the words interchangeably)—are the "negative" and the "positive." The former, generally professed in the West and to some extent even practised there, deals with the question: "What is the area within which the subject... is or should be left to do or be what he wants to do or be, without interference by other persons?" The latter, universally professed and practised in the Sino-Soviet East, deals with a very different question: "What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, one thing rather than another?"

"Negative" freedom is a familiar enough concept, defined by liberal and conservative theorists, from Locke and Hobbes to Mill, Constant, Bentham, and Tocqueville. They have disagreed as to the area to be left to the individual free of society's control (Hobbes thought damned little) but they all have agreed that *something* must be left—"To invade that preserve, however small, would be despotism."

> The doctrine is comparatively modern [Mr. Berlin writes]. There seems to be scarcely any consciousness of individual liberty as a political ideal in the ancient world.... The domination of this ideal has been the exception rather than the rule, even in the recent history of the West. Nor has liberty in this sense often formed a rallying cry for the great masses of mankind. The desire not to be impinged upon, to be left to oneself, has been a mark of high civilisation both on the part of individuals and communities. The sense of privacy itself, of the area of personal relationships as something sacred in its own right, derives from a conception of freedom which, for all its religious roots, is scarcely older, in its developed state, than the Renaissance or the Reformation.

"Positive" liberty is both older—Plato's republic was "free" in this sense and this sense only—and newer—its historical importance begins, I would guess, with the French Revolution. As Mr. Berlin writes, it has much more popular appeal; the masses can be set in motion far more easily by an appeal to free themselves, *en masse*, from colonialism or the bourgeoisie than by a call to individual freedom. Indeed if, as is almost invariably the case, the victorious underdogs find their new masters as or more restrictive than the old ones, the fact that they are "our own S.O.B.'s" makes a big difference. Philosophically, this kind of liberty rests on the assumption that there is one "real" human nature, with

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"rational" needs. Every prophet of positive freedom, from Plato to Khrushchev, thinks he knows what this "real" human nature is.

> This renders it easy for me to conceive of myself as coercing others for their own sake, in their, not my, interest. I am then claiming that I know what they truly need better than they know it themselves [and] they would not resist me if they were as rational and as wise as I.... But I may go on to claim a good deal more than this. I may declare that they are actually aiming at what in their benighted state they consciously resist, because there exists within them an occult entity—their latent rational will, or their "true" purpose—and that this entity, although it is belied by all that they overtly feel and do and say, is their "real" self, of which the poor empirical self in space and time may know nothing or little; and that this inner spirit is the only self that deserves to have its wishes taken into account. Once I take this view I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes of men or societies, to bully, oppress, torture them in the name, or on behalf, of their "real" selves....

Although, or perhaps because, Mr. Berlin's sympathies are obviously all with the negative concept, he talks mostly about the positive. The first four pages are an occasional prelude that scores neatly off the neglect of "fundamental problems of politics by professional philosophers" and pays what seems to me excessive tribute, even for such an occasion, to his predecessor in the Chichele Chair, one "Douglas Cole," whom I have found to be, after extensive trans-Atlantic research, actually the late G. D. H. Cole, a thinker I have not found inspiriting. There follow nine pages on negative freedom, thirty-six on positive freedom, and a coda of six pages contrasting the two. The trouble with all these pages on positive freedom, ingenious and persuasive as they are, is that I'm not at all sure that, politically, it *is* a "concept of liberty." Mr. Berlin shows clearly enough how it applies to the individual who wishes to be his own master and so must learn the limitations that life imposes so that he may become free precisely through his understanding of necessity, that is, his freedom from illusion. But when it comes to groups of men, it is always a question of some of them imposing *their* notion of necessity on the rest, and we get the situation so well described in the long quotation just above. But is this freedom at all, except for the imposers? Can one conceive of freedom as collective? It seems to me simply a play on words based on a false analogy between the individual and the group, like Hegel's theory of the "organic" state or the false conception of nations as collective persons, as in the attempt to attribute moral responsibility to them. A people cannot be punished, a people cannot be free, a people doesn't exist except as an abstract conception; the only realities are the individuals who actually make up "the people"; these can choose to give up some or most of their freedom so that the people they belong to can be "free" from some disliked ruling power, but this is just a loose expression; if the individual gives up more of his own freedom—which for him is the only freedom there is—under the new system, then he is less free than he was before, even though "the people" he belongs to have been "freed." Mr. Berlin rather sneers at anarchism ("saintly anarchists") yet I think its insistence on the test of freedom being the effect here and now on the individual is actually quite realistic. And I think, in spite of his excellent intentions, he confutes things a little by including, even for polemical purposes, the notion of positive freedom as a "concept of liberty."

Despite Mr. Berlin's lucid, often eloquent prose, I must admit that I found his treatise hard going. I am a creature which needs constant infusions of the oxygen of the concrete to sustain life in the rarefied atmosphere of abstract reasoning. My mind tends to wander. There are many telling quotations,* but there is very little historical data, and I think this is a defect in writing about political questions. I found the footnotes often more readable than the text—as with another important and (for me) even more difficult current work, Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago and Cambridge University Press, 1958)—because they are more specific. One is able to get through Marx and Engels, despite their Hegelian flights, because they are constantly giving one examples—"This is what we mean." For instance, Mr. Berlin writes: "It is clear that [individual liberty] has little to hope for from the rule of majorities; democracy as such is logically uncommitted to it." Would not this excellent point be vivified with the refreshing dew of illustration—a reference, perhaps, to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has become the chief defender of our civil liberties, insisting on equal rights for Negroes against the Southern majority and also resisting (often) the efforts of our democratically-

* As, Comte's, "If we do not allow free-thinking in chemistry and biology, why should we allow it in morals and politics?"—a classic formulation of the modern fallacy of trying to bring under scientific control fields that are intrinsically not adapted to this operation. Or Bentham's blunt, "Every law is an infraction of liberty." Also his: "Is not liberty to do evil, liberty? If not, what is it? Do we not say that it is necessary to take liberty from idiots and bad men, because they abuse it?" Indeed, Bentham comes out a much more acute—and sympathetic—thinker than I had realised.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

elected legislative and executive branches to deprive political dissidents of their civil rights?

Nor is it just a matter of a crutch for the non-philosophically-minded reader. I suggest it is also a help to the author, who otherwise may glide from one abstraction to another, whereas if he were in the habit of supporting his generalisations with specific instances, these rough, awkward fragments of reality might check the smooth descent into error. Thus Mr. Berlin writes of the positive concept: "Liberty, so far from being incompatible with authority, becomes virtually identical with it. This is the thought and language of all the declarations of the rights of man in the 18th century." But if he had felt obliged to justify, with examples, the second sentence, might he not have remembered not only Rousseau but also Jefferson? Jefferson, who in drafting the Declaration of Independence, specified "the pursuit of happiness" among man's "inalienable rights," adding that "To secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," and even spelling out the revolutionary "Right of the People to alter or abolish" any government they feel has become "destructive of those ends." He might also have remembered the "Bill of Rights" that Jefferson helped add to the Constitution—the first ten amendments, which protect the area of individual freedom against the authority of the State.

Another stylistic difficulty with this treatise is that, perhaps because it was delivered as a lecture, it is essentially rhetoric—rhetoric on an extremely high level, rhetoric often with bite and wit, but still—rhetoric. This is related to the previous point, because rhetoric tends to be abstract, since an audience would become restive under too much documentation. It also means that what carries an audience along easily makes hard reading because a lot of extra words are used (like the reassuring gestures of a speaker) and because repetition is not only permissible but necessary. The lecturer must frequently mark time while his audience catches up with his thought. (My experience, at least, is that something written to be read by the eye goes much too *fast* for a listening audience; the ear is slow and emotional, while the eye is quick and intellectual.)

Mr. Berlin concludes his argument:

> One belief, more than any other, is responsible for the slaughter of individuals on the altars of the great historical ideals.... This is the belief that somewhere, in the past or in the future, in divine revelation or in the mind of an individual thinker, in the pronouncements of history or science, or in the simple heart of an uncorrupted good man, there is a final solution....
>
> To preserve our absolute categories or ideals at the expense of human lives offends equally against the principles of science and of history; it is an attitude found in equal measure on the right and left wings in our days, and is not reconcilable with the principles accepted by those who respect the facts....
>
> It may be that the ideal of freedom to live as one wishes—and the pluralism of values connected with it—is only the late fruit of our declining capitalist civilisation.... But no sceptical conclusions seem to me to follow. Principles are not less sacred because their duration cannot be guaranteed. Indeed, the very desire for guarantees that our values are eternal and secure in some objective heaven is perhaps only a craving for the certainties of childhood or the absolute values of our primitive past. "To realise the relative validity of one's convictions," said an admirable writer of our time, "and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilised man from a barbarian." To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to guide one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and far more dangerous, moral and political immaturity.

The merits and defects of *Two Concepts of Liberty* come out clearly in this eloquent, all too eloquent peroration. He is right, one thinks, but perhaps at too great a length. He is right,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but one would like to know why he thinks the positive concept is "found in equal measure on the right and left wings in our days," and what exactly he means by "right" and "left"; if he means what I mean, I disagree about "equal measure," but of course I don't know if he does mean what I mean. He is right, but there is a smooth imprecision about many of his formulations that makes them sound better than they read. He is right (rhetoric is catching) but *who* is that "admirable writer of our time"? Still, the important thing is—he is right.

Dwight Macdonald

Fact and Fury

The Great Powers. By MAX BELOFF. *Allen and Unwin.* 20s.

THIS collection of essays written between 1950 and 1958 is a constant stimulant to thought and occasionally to fury.

The fury arises over the essays on American policy written in the months following the Suez affair of 1956, an episode on which partisanship is, no doubt, still unavoidable. What is infuriating here is not Mr. Beloff's opinion of Sir Anthony Eden's policy, on which judgments legitimately differ; but rather his bland assumption that the Anglo-American dispute on that occasion arose because the anti-colonial bias and international inexperience of the Americans prevented them from appreciating the Middle Eastern "facts of life," upon which the more sophisticated British were basing their plans.

Not only does this superior British attitude towards the United States seem to me to be long since out-of-date, but it is manifestly irrelevant to the Suez affair, in which the majority of sophisticated opinion throughout Europe (as well as in the British press and public service) was, if not pro-Dulles, certainly anti-Eden. Even in France, whose policy was dictated by factors peculiar to her own situation, the disapproval of Anglo-French policy privately expressed by members of the Quai d'Orsay was only a degree less unanimous than that of the British Foreign Service.

Mr. Beloff is usually successful in writing of contemporary issues with something of an historian's objectivity, but over Suez and Nasser his feelings temporarily overcame him. The comparison of Mr. Dulles' policy towards Nasser with that of Neville Chamberlain's towards Hitler is common enough in the popular right-wing press, but one was surely entitled to expect from Mr. Beloff some supporting argument to give depth to this superficial analogy.

A much more interesting parallel is suggested by Mr. Beloff's own excellent essay on Benjamin Franklin. There he describes how the North American colonists, having decided to shake off British rule, played a dangerous but clever game of making common cause with England's main enemy, France, while always retaining the English connection just sufficiently to avoid exchanging French for English domination. In this, we are told, Franklin single-mindedly pursued a narrowly American interest and never forgot that, if he was to succeed in escaping both the French and the British nets, he must simultaneously pursue America's "manifest destiny" by a policy of expansion within the American continent.

Cautious as one must be about pressing historical parallels too far, one cannot fail to see some similarities between Franklin's problem and Nasser's, and between their respective techniques. History may be said to have vindicated Franklin. Whether it will similarly vindicate Nasser no one can yet foresee, but if Mr. Beloff could be persuaded to contemplate both men's actions in an equally analytical spirit and with an equal absence of moralising, something more interesting would surely emerge.

I have one other bone to pick with Mr. Beloff. Even in his pre-Suez essays he shows sensitivity to American criticism of British colonialism. (Maybe it was this predisposition that made him take the American attitude over Suez so hard.) Traditional American anti-colonialism has, indeed, often been crude and ill-informed. Even so, as Mr. Beloff himself says, it was at worst a good idea carried too far. To-day, it has become more discriminating and it would surely be wrong to wish to see it wholly reversed.

Yet this is what Mr. Beloff seems to want. Only when he is recalling (with relish) Theodore Roosevelt's wholehearted eulogies of British colonialism in 1910 does he seem entirely happy about the American attitude. Even by the standards of 1910, however, his harsh judgment upon more recent American anti-colonialism seems insecurely founded. He quotes, with apparent approval, the defence of Roosevelt, made at the time by Edward Wood (now Lord Halifax), in which he insisted that "colonial government itself depended upon consent not on force and therefore it was essential to maintain prestige. . . ." If this be the true principle, it is hard to see how Mr. Beloff can talk of the "premature" attainment of independence by Indonesia and Indo-China as being an effect of American anti-colonialism. Surely *consent* to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

colonial rule is just what was lacking in both these territories after 1945. The *prestige* of colonial power was lacking too, but that was the doing of the Germans and Japanese, not the Americans. One can readily accept Mr. Beloff's warning that independence by itself will not develop a backward colonial territory, but still believe that to prolong colonial rule once opposition to it has become strong is to perpetuate an anachronism. Development then becomes impossible, and the inevitable sequel is the sort of colonial war of which both Indo-China and Indonesia themselves had a taste.

Most alarming of all is Mr. Beloff's admonition to the Americans that the colonial question is basically one of the rich against the poor, and that the United States (being indubitably rich) "belongs with the rich and not with the poor and can get nowhere with an ideology proper to the latter group of countries." The apparent implicational of this is that the internation class war is now on, and that any nation which fails to line up on one side or the other, according to the level of its bank balance, is a class traitor. This doctrine seems to me to be nothing short of disastrous and, if put into practice, would justify everything said by anti-imperialists from Hobson and Lenin to Nasser and Khrushchev.

The essays in which Mr. Beloff discusses the study of contemporary history and the problems of international organisation are easier on the blood pressure, if just as provocative. Two points of special importance stand out. Firstly, the desire for "national self-determination," though still a very strong political force, has no particular relevance nowadays to economic requirements, which tend to demand the absorption of small units into larger ones. The obvious solution for this difficulty—federation—is far harder to work than is usually recognised, and becomes steadily more difficult as the responsibilities and powers of government grow. The 18th-century experience of the *laissez-faire* United States, Mr. Beloff is convinced, offers no valid precedent for Europe to-day. It has perhaps more relevance to newly-independent territories, which have been accustomed to strong central direction by a colonial government, and are now looking for a substitute.

These doubts about federalism, as a formula of general application, lead on to the second important point—that there is an ever-widening range of national problems whose solution is dependent on conditions over which purely national institutions have no control. This fact—with which smaller powers have been familiar much longer than Britain—gives an air of unreality to much of our traditional political life, and is weakening democratic control by national parliaments over government policy. We are faced, Mr. Beloff suggests, with three alternatives: either to return to national sovereignty; or to set up super-states incorporating the small national units; or to allow power to pass steadily to a growing international bureaucracy, operating remote from parliamentary control.

This is a fair enough picture of the present scene, and the implications of it are serious. To try to reassert exclusive national sovereignties would be to challenge the economic and technical forces of the age; the attempt to build super-states is likely (at least in Mr. Beloff's view) to arouse such powerful resistances as to bring it to frustration; while to surrender to an international bureaucracy would be to allow the vitality of Western bureaucratic politics to wither away.

If international welfare economics are indeed as sharply in conflict with effective political democracy as Mr. Beloff suggests, it seems inevitable that underdeveloped territories should opt for welfare and let political democracy go. Western countries, less singleminded about economics, will more probably sacrifice some development in order to retain free institutions.

So ambivalent an attitude—whose most likely result will be that "we may go on for years yet,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uncomfortably and irritably balancing between all three theoretical possibilities"—hardly suggests that the West possesses a political dynamic capable of winning world-wide support. Indeed it may be said that this is the picture of Western democracy which makes Mr. Khrushchev so certain of his ultimate triumph.

One must hope that Mr. Beloff is too pessimistic about the possibilities of associating democratic institutions with the work of the international bureaucracy. He does not comment in these essays upon the prospects of the European Common Assembly, nor upon the linking of such a bureaucratic body as the O.E.E.C. with a parliamentary body such as the Council of Europe. It is true that the Strasbourg experiments have not been impressive so far (because governments have not taken them seriously), but the inauguration of the European Economic Community may now be forcing a change of attitude. Mr. Beloff's warning about the nature of the present trend should help to stir them into more creative action.

Kenneth Younger

A Writer of Our Time

The Eighth Day of the Week. By MAREK HLASKO. *Allen & Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

The Vet's Daughter. By BARBARA COMYNS. *Heinemann.* 13s. 6d.

The Feathers of Death. By SIMON RAVEN. *Anthony Blond.* 15s.

Leopard with a Thin Skin. By JOHN WATNEY. *Jonathan Cape.* 15s.

No Love for Johnnie. By WILFRED FIENBURGH. *Hutchinson.* 15s.

VERY slowly, a literature of protest is beginning to emerge from Eastern Europe. The West has always had such a literature; each fresh example is eagerly written and read: it is our way of proving the pudding of freedom. But Western writers of social or moral revolt (nearly all born in, or making for, the middle class) have no first-hand experience of real evil on a universal scale. Their innocence makes them feel guilty, and inspires them to fresh protests: big bright empty bubbles, private neuroses and frustrations coming up for air. The imagination and intellect wish to understand suffering, but can only do so by creating images of doubtful, or partial validity. In contrast, writers in Eastern Europe have experienced poverty, imprisonment, degradation, and hopelessness as everyday realities, shared with the majority. In a recent article in ENCOUNTER (December 1958) Stephen Spender referred to the young Polish writer, Marek Hlasko, who by an irony inescapable in countries like his has gone into exile as the result of writing honestly and movingly about the human misery he has grown up with; thereby cutting himself off from his native streets and language to face a future in which he has Western freedom to write along with the Western heritage of ignorance about the true worst which is happening to men and women in our time. He has now asked permission to return to Poland, having put it on record that a writer without a country is nothing. Meanwhile his passionate novel about the poor of Warsaw, *The Eighth Day of the Week*, has been published over here.

The first thing one notices is the familiarity of the idiom. This isn't just the colloquial American translation, but the whole tone and direction of the book, the anti-climaxes, the emptiness. It reads like the authentic original blue-print of anger and despair, from which our pale copies have been traced. The reality of most recent English writings of revolt—even the reality of Orwell, powerfully motivated though his was—has always been optional, gratuitous, a minority report. You did not—except for private reasons—*have* to live like that. Such a reality, however strongly you yourself believed in it, would not seem, to many of your readers, a reality at all. But Hlasko's reality is absolute, total, compulsory; not a romantic literary creation. Hlasko did not invent this Warsaw of sex, drink, violence, and disgust; he did not have to vamp up his reactions or invent symbols for them. What is abnormal over here is normal over there; it is the common lot of the articulate and the inarticulate alike. The vodka is not imaginary like the Victory gin of *1984*, but as real as the gin of 18th-century London; the loudspeakers are shouting now, in the bars and tenements, not echoing in the desperate imagination of the outsider. Grzegorz's savage, ruthless running-commentary on the world that has collapsed round him is quite different from the solipsistic outbursts, half-comic, half-hysterical, of a Jimmy Porter or a Dean Moriarty. It is directed against the same suffering which is killing his mother, turning his father into an animal and his sister into a whore. This degradation and dehumanisation are Hlasko's theme. "I want to know what I can go back to life with," says Grzegorz. It isn't so much that things will never change as that, even if they do, it will be too late for these people and for

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thousands like them. In this book nothing succeeds; Grzegorz tries to kill himself, like the hero of his own unwritten novel, but fails; Agnieszka, his sister, and her lover, Piotr, cannot even find a few square yards of privacy to make love in; in her disgust and despair, the girl gives herself to a business man and afterwards helps him to wash his wife's sheets: "Tell your friends about me, if you want to," she says. In such a life, to think and hope are so absurd that they are unreal; the only ones who exist are those who have given up thinking and trying. And this, one feels, is how men's minds are being destroyed in the 20th century, and not by any of the crude science-fiction devices created by the Western imagination in its hunger for martyrdom. One thinks of the gallant Orwell, lying on that bug-ridden bed in a Paris slum, saying to himself, on the Coué principle, "I have reached the bottom."

Out of this grim world Hlasko has created neither a tract nor an autobiography, but a poetic novel about many oppressed people, Dostoievsky ("only he is a little bit truthful, but you run away from his love with your hands burned, this isn't for the times we live in") brought up-to-date; here the privileged status has passed from the idiot and the murderer and the lover of God and man into the hands of whores and pimps and street-corner drunks "stamping out the stars in the puddles."

Meanwhile, from the comfortably padded cells of the Welfare State prison, the private fantasies keep pouring out. Quite a good batch all the same, and one, *The Vet's Daughter*, is almost in another class altogether. It is nearly as brief as Hlasko's novel; Miss Comyns knocks you out instead of crawling to a points victory over about thirty rounds; it made me reflect that the average English novel is really much too long. Miss Barbara Comyns writes with the humble verbal economy of the true visionary; each word matters, as it did in Nathaniel West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*, and doesn't in the average eighty-thousand-word ramble round the shires. The story is told by the heroine, Alice Rowlands, a simple-minded girl ill-treated by a tyrannical father in Edwardian South London; a brown, shabby, sinister London where wickedness flourished in parlour and basement; the setting is beautifully done. Alice's mother dies, worn out by cruelty and neglect; the girl is rescued and given a job, companion to an old lady who later kills herself. Alice has discovered that she has the power to levitate herself (one accepts this completely). Her father finds out and smells money in her powers. The end is inevitable. Alice is a tragic victim, an outcast whose abnormality destroys her. But though it may sound like fantasy this book reads like a tragic fable of innocence defeated by the ignorance, greed, and cruelty of the world.

The Feathers of Death is a rather literary and over-padded effort. Though well contrived, and in general well enough written, it has some bizarre touches of pseudo-epic grandeur: "so the next day we buried Malcolm Harley and the rest in the forest that grows on Mount Chalcos, and then we left Glukeia for that time. . . ." This suggests that the author is uneasy with his chosen material and feels the need to inflate it to make it more "significant." In fact, Mr. Raven has written a highbrow *Caine Mutiny*. A young officer in one of those posh regiments (like Mr. Waugh's Halberdiers) where everybody is terribly civilised and keeps quoting Horace, falls in love with a private soldier. He later shoots him in tricky circumstances, and is court-martialled on a murder charge. The homosexual story is well and frankly treated: heaven knows, this is a subject on which it is scarcely possible to be too "civilised." What worried me was the rather casual and ambivalent treatment of the soldier's death; and I found the ending (which I won't divulge) unconvincing. The character of the young soldier and of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dear old C.S.M. were well done; but for me the officers never really came alive. The colonel, for instance (misleadingly labelled a voluptuary in the blurb), was obviously meant to display all the author's own belief in tolerance, urbanity, etc. He seemed to me a bit too good to be true; and his final oration sounded like something out of Kelly's Key to Thucydides, with phrases like "would that there were no other." But despite its faults, this book held my interest as a piece of narrative.

Leopard with a Thin Skin provides an excellent example of the length to which an English writer has to push fantasy, allegory, symbolism—the whole works—in order to make a simple point about man's inhumanity to man. Jim Nolan is a mental patient who claims he is really sane but is being held prisoner by his firm in collaboration with the government. His *alter ego* is a leopard in the London Zoo which he helped to catch. He now feels, commendably, that animals should not be locked up any more than people. But the man-leopard identification seemed to me too obvious a device, and the bureaucratic muddle behind it all rather inadequate (though I don't deny such a thing might conceivably happen). Mr. Watney has to keep things going by mixing in farce, love, and thrills in the manner of a Graham Greene entertainment. The result is rather like a soufflé with a chunk of uncooked meat in the middle. Mr. Watney, being an able writer, destroys sympathy and conviction on one level as fast as he creates them on another.

Lastly, the current—perhaps the year's—best-seller, *No Love for Johnnie*. Up to a point, and not just commercially, this is *Room at the Top* again: another working-class hero (though a bit longer in the tooth, and more pathetic, than Joe Lampton); the same slick, bespoke style, "compulsively readable"; cynicism, sex-and-sadness, all ringing with the dead hollow accuracy of our time. The "difference" (in the copywriter's sense of the word, *i.e.*, not a real difference at all) is that the setting is political. This book has been attacked by the Left and smugly serialised by the Right; those who don't care either way will be neither shocked nor surprised at someone's taking the party-racket as the subject for a novel in the current rebel-and-timeserver mode. It was just a question of when an intelligent man with the requisite background knowledge would take the plunge.

Johnny Byrne at forty-two is an overlooked man; a Labour M.P. but unplaced in the new Labour government. Inferiority and an unhappy marriage (his wife is a frigid Communist, which takes care of everything) make him bitter and lonely (stop me if you've heard it before). The wife walks out; he tries a tart ("he was trembling ... her perfume was pungent"); in Westminster he gets the chance to lead a rebel group by asking the P.M. an awkward question. Meanwhile, though, he has met *the* girl, at the usual party ("she was sitting sedately in a corner ... a cool contrast to the lusty girls who obtruded their sex from every angle"), and goes to bed with her, thus missing his cue in the House. But all turns out well for Lucky Johnnie. The only reason he didn't get that job was his ex-wife's Communism; and thanks to sex he has not blotted his copybook with the P.M. (an inspired touch), and finishes up as Assistant Postmaster-General, someone having developed cancer with only five pages to go. *No Love for Johnnie* comes as a sharp, if not very lingering, reminder that in the present state of party politics you can't expect much of a price if you sell yourself. Most of the time you can't even give yourself away; but if you're lucky, and hang around, they'll come and take you, not because they want you but because they've got to have somebody, for the look of the thing.

K. W. Gransden

Conrad's Ambiguity

Conrad the Novelist. By Albert J. Guerard. *Cambridge University Press.* 30s.

During the last few years a boom has developed in Conrad criticism. Although Conrad's position as a significant English novelist has been long established, it is only recently that this remarkable Polish-English genius has come to receive that kind of central critical attention reserved for the very greatest writers. He is not an easy novelist to discuss critically: indeed, I know of no modern novelist whose work eludes criticism in the way Conrad's does, who is so difficult to come to terms with finally and confidently. Recent criticism has done a great deal to liberate the essential Conrad from the romantic exploiter of picturesque seascapes he was taken to be during his lifetime. The Conrad we are interested in to-day is the ironic prober of moral ambiguities, the explorer of the moment of experience when the codes men have lived by cease to work, the recorder of the complex self-deceptions which both sustain and destroy men. Yet his techniques for achieving this are often cumbersome, and again and again we are puzzled to find an effect being brought off in spite of awkwardness (both verbal and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

structural) or imprecision. He is a great novelist, we are inclined to feel, in spite of everything—in spite of haziness and mystification and pretentiousness, the adjectival lushness of *Heart of Darkness*, the multiplication of points of view in *Lord Jim*, the wilful scattering of the narrative in the early part of *Nostromo*. But is it "in spite of" or "because of"? Are these things, which would be faults in any other novelist, faults in Conrad, or are they bound up intimately with his essential greatness? There are, of course, other and more obvious faults in Conrad, especially in his weaker novels; but the faults—if they *are* faults—of his great novels puzzle the critic because they are so essentially part of the Conradian world, and that world is true and revealing and moving.

What Conrad criticism has needed most of all is a critic interested in and acutely responsive to the creative process, who can follow the developing texture of his novels with that imaginative understanding of how the artist's sense of truth is *realised* in the work at each point, how that sense of truth makes its demands and how those demands determine not only how the action is deployed but also how language is used at each point.

A critic like Dr. Leavis can effectively demonstrate Conrad's greatness by concentrating on the grand design and on the brilliant moment; Douglas Hewitt has illuminated the true nature of some of Conrad's main themes; Morton Zabel has brilliantly observed certain details of attitude and technique; Thomas Moser has diagnosed most acutely the significance of Conrad's failure in his attempts to present the relationship between the sexes where sexual love is concerned. Mr. Guerard, in what seems to me the best critical book on Conrad yet written, goes further than this: he explores the principal novels and stories with delicate perceptiveness, and at the same time with critical rigour, searching them for what is really in them, and for *all* that is in them, drawing our attention continually to what the language is doing, to how images and objects function both literally and symbolically, to how the narrative *works*. It really helps; it helps us to see with more penetrating vision what Conrad wrote and also to understand some at least of the Conrad puzzles, the presence of weakness in the midst of greatness and even the achievement of greatness through apparent weakness.

One is sometimes afraid that Mr. Guerard is going to overdo the hunt for symbols, to treat Conrad as though he were Hawthorne or Melville or even Kafka; but just when we think he is about to press a point too far, or to oversimplify, he proceeds to qualify, to enquire further, to interrogate himself as critic before proceeding with a renewed sense of responsibility and a renewed delicacy of touch.

> But that insight remains irrelevant which can never become æsthetic enjoyment, or which takes a story too far out of its own area of discourse. I say this with the uneasy conviction that criticism should expose itself to as many as possible of a novel's suasions, and that it is only too easy . . . to stress the abstract and symbolic at the expense of everything else.

This kind of interruption both reassures the reader and leads him on.

The best parts of this book are the discussions of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and *Lord Jim*: they can stand as easily the most perceptive and the fullest critical accounts of these novels. On *Nostromo*—that great yet in some respects baffling novel—he is often illuminating and helpful, yet he does not follow the "curve of the meaning" as precisely as he does with the other two novels; he never seems to arrive quite at its central organising reality; one suspects that for such a long and complex novel he needed more space, more room to manœuvre, than he could allow himself here. His remarks on the political novels, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, are perhaps incomplete, but they are wise and sensitive. He does not quite know what to do with *Typhoon*—it has not enough "psycho-moral ambiguity" for him—but he knows very well what to do with *Victory*, and gives briskly his reasons for dismissing it (it seems to me, justly) from the list of Conrad's great novels.

The book has its faults. There are occasions when Mr. Guerard pushes his "psycho-moral ambiguity" rather too far; he brings in analogies with Faulkner whether or not they are helpful; he uses R. L. Stevenson as a whipping boy quite unjustly ("The Beach at Falesa," which he sneers at in a footnote, is a very un-Conradian story but it has its own distinction); he runs together, as illustrations of the kind of novel which *Lord Jim* is *not*, *Middlemarch* and *Barchester Towers*, as different from each other in complexity of meaning and in the use of the fictional imagination as two novels could possibly be. And he is sometimes uncritically facile in his manipulation of Freudian or Jungian notions. But these are minor points. The book as a whole is a most valuable guide to Conrad the novelist, done with a critical scrupulosity that is a joy to watch in action. Even where one disagrees, one is forced to re-read and re-think the novel or story concerned before one can see exactly what it is that one is disagreeing about. Everywhere the book challenges and stimulates. It is not easy reading, but the reader of Conrad will find that it gives him new eyes.

David Daiches

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Characters in Search of an Author

DR. ZHIVAGO underwent many misfortunes, but he was spared at least some of Boris Pasternak's own trials. These include Western journalists in search of "a story" and eager foreign well-wishers (currently a mysterious Spaniard whom the Russians, curiously, have given a visa) who want to provide him with lucrative contracts to go on an Anglo-American barnstorming tour.

On February 11th, London's *Daily Mail* published under a front-page banner headline what it described as a "remarkable" interview with Pasternak in Moscow by its reporter, Mr. Anthony Brown. It also photostated an obviously genuine manuscript of a new poem by Pasternak entitled *The Nobel Prize*; and provided a hasty, literal, and not inaccurate translation ("by one of the best poetry translators available in London yesterday"), which we refrain, for obvious reasons, from reprinting.

In his article, Mr. Brown maintained that "Pasternak took the opportunity of my visit and interview to allow his poem to be published in the West," although "he [Pasternak, but obviously not Brown] realised fully that publication in the West of *The Nobel Prize* might further endanger his personal safety. . . ."

Three days later, according to the New York *Herald Tribune* (February 14th), Pasternak denounced the young reporter who had "volunteered to deliver the poem to Mr. Pasternak's friend, Jacqueline de Proyart, curator of the Tolstoy Museum in Paris." Pasternak said—the report was a United Press agency report written by Henry Shapiro—that "the poem was given to Brown as an autograph for transmission to my friend, Mme Proyart, but not for publication." Using "unprintable words" he condemned the breach of confidence, and announced that henceforth he would receive no other correspondents, "who only hinder my work and cause me harm." Pasternak's wife, Zina Nikolaevna, turned on him indignantly: "How many times have I told you not to trust journalists? They are only exploiting you for personal gain!" News of the unauthorised publication, according to Henry Shapiro, "spread a pall of gloom around the Pasternak household and practically broke up the poet's 69th birthday party which Mr. Pasternak was celebrating with his wife and a few close friends. . . ."

Characteristically, in an interview given earlier to the Scripps-Howard correspondent, Henry Taylor, Pasternak was quoted as saying that he would not retract a single word of *Dr. Zhivago*, and that he was "grateful in my heart that the world is reading it. . . . In every generation there has to be some fool who will speak the truth as he sees it."

In a second statement to the United Press correspondent (N.Y. *Times*, N.Y. *Herald Tribune*, February 17th), Pasternak "reiterated his indignation with a British reporter who, he said, betrayed his trust," and added: "My poem *Nobel Prize* was composed at the height of a difficult, anxious period at the end of October. The concluding lines of the poem were harmless in conception but, since they were vaguely worded, they permitted false interpretation." Since then Pasternak is known to have left his home in Peredelkino, evidently to avoid the huge press corps which had descended on Moscow for the Macmillan visit.

Neither the *Daily Mail* nor its reporter have made any statement. The Moscow despatches by Henry Shapiro were distributed by the United Press in London, but only *The Spectator* recorded the matter in a brief paragraph (on the basis of foreign clippings) and observed, with a slight ironic-bitter note, "so far not a word of explanation has appeared."

Francis Williams (in *The New Statesman*) went on to say that "after making careful enquiries I find it hard to believe that either the *Mail* or its reporter was guilty of a deliberate breach of faith." His theory of "a misunderstanding" seemed, after our own enquiries, like a very generous explanation. Even if there were some vagueness as to the agreement between poet and reporter, should not a great and responsible newspaper have weighed the grave element of "personal danger" against the lure of a "sensational poem"? (In such cases an editor-in-chief usually struggles hard with his own conscience, and usually wins.) Apparently it was only afterwards that the considerations of "danger" and "political discretion" began to dictate what Pasternak news was fit to print.

This much seems clear: if the poems (there were several) were, in point of fact, offered (in a moment of thoughtless exuberance?) for publication in a mass newspaper, then they should not have been printed. If they were not offered, then, as Mr. Victor Frank pointed out in his eloquent *Spectator* plea, "to leave the man in peace," quoting the line in the poem in which Pasternak compares himself to "a hunted beast,"

> it looks, to our everlasting disgrace, as if the greatest living Russian poet is being hunted by two packs: the Soviet writers and the Western newsmen. . . .

•

Eng. Lit.

IN 1956 the State Publishing House of the Soviet Ministry of Education published a book for students of English literature, *Studies in English and American Literature and Style*. To say that it presented the Soviet reader with an inadequate picture would be an understatement:

> The period between the two wars witnessed the growth of a literature that was closely connected with the progressive social movement of the people. The most distinguished figures in British progressive literature were R. Fox, John Sommerfield, and Sean O'Casey. After the Second World War the progressive writers of Great Britain, J. Lindsay, J. Aldridge, and others,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bound their lives with the struggle of the working people for peace, democracy, and social progress. In their literary work they follow the method of socialist realism, the main characters of their books being workers, farmers, and progressive-minded intellectuals.

Since then the reflection of English literature in the Soviet mirror has changed a little (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, April 12th, 1958):

> How true a picture of contemporary foreign literature does the Soviet reader get? . . . A striking example is given by the publishing plans for the contemporary English literature.
>
> The ideological struggle in the literature of capitalist countries is very complex. Perhaps mostly in the literature of Great Britain, as a result of various historical conditions. Apart from the production of pornography and crime stories on the American model (this is good business!) many other decadent works are published and widely advertised by the press and radio. This decadent literature, full of hatred for everything progressive, is represented by the poetry of T. Eliot, by the novels of Huxley, by the anti-Soviet slanders of Orwell, who died in 1950, and of Evelyn Waugh, who is still alive.
>
> Reactionary literature stands in contrast with the young progressive literature of Great Britain: together with such well-known authors as Aldridge and Lindsay, Sommerfield and Gwen Thomas, Lessing and Ian Doherty, we must also name that old friend of the Soviet Union, Sean O'Casey.
>
> The merits of the progressive writers have often been stressed by our critics. But dozens of contemporary English writers, many of them original and talented, keep to the middle-of-the-road; they reflect the moods and tastes of wide bourgeois-democratic circles. Among them are such masters of style as Graham Greene, who has shown an interest in social problems long before *The Quiet American*, Ch. P. Snow, a well-known English writer (author of a series of novels, *Strangers and Brothers*, describing various social circles in post-war Britain), and Joyce Cary, who died recently, an honest and talented writer. There are also several authors who protest against colonialism and show sympathy for the subjugated peoples (Basil Davidson, Desmond Stewart, and others). And finally, there is a group of young writers and poets, "the angry young men," who are very popular in Great Britain and reflect the feelings of wide bourgeois-democratic circles of the post-war generation deceived by the lavish promises of "social revolution" when the Labourites took power. Among them is Kingsley Amis, John Wain, the playwright Osborne, and many other writers and poets representing the same trend. The majority of these English writers are realists in a limited sphere of observation. . . .

But, asks the writer, is all this reflected in the plans of the State Publishing House and the *Gospolizdat*?

> The plans of the former included, in 1958, a series of works by the progressive English writers. Among them: a novel about the revolutionary struggle of the Chartists by Gwen Thomas, *Leaves on the Wind*, an anti-colonialist novel by Aldridge, *Heroes of the Desert Horizons*, a collection of short stories by Doris Lessing, *Hunger*, depicting the life and struggle of the British workers. One can only welcome the publication of all these books. On the other hand, the publishing house could have easily dispensed with the works of Somerset Maugham. Instead, it should have presented the Soviet reader with the works of those English writers who reflect the critical attitude of bourgeois-democratic circles *vis-à-vis* Western reality, and their longing towards peace and just human relations, even though it is still spontaneous and confused. . . .

The special number of *The Times Literary Supplement*, "Books in the Changing World," has been referred to with glee as evidence of the decadence of English literature ("Lament on the Shores of the Thames," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, December 30th, 1958, and "On the Death of Novel, Poetry, and Drama," *Innostrannaya Literatura*, No. 1, 1959).

But during Mr. Macmillan's stay in Moscow, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (February 24th, 1959) announced forthcoming new translations: John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, John Wain's *Hurry on Down*, Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana*.*

*

Kennan

UNDER the title "Kennan Falsifies History," the theoretical organ of the Soviet Communist Party, *Kommunist* (No. 13, 1958), published a long review of the second volume of George Kennan's work, *The Decision to Intervene*. The style of the review is not very disengaging:

> Kennan, as an idealist, denies the objective laws of social development, and writes as an enemy of the socialist revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Trying to "dismiss" the new social system he uses deliberate slander. The malicious tales of imperialist troubadours about the "terror" and "destruction" of the Soviet revolution have been dispelled long ago. Of all revolutions known to us the October revolution proved to be the most peaceful, the most bloodless. . . . Kennan does not confine himself to blackening the Soviet régime, calling it totalitarian, but he opposes it to the capitalist régime existing in the U.S.A., which allegedly secures the flourishing of democracy, individual freedom,

---

* "What do you mean?"

"They could easily have shot us down on the front. Or perhaps they're using us for bait. Of course, you throw away the bait if it's no good."

"What a macabre woman you are."

"Oh, no. We're back into the *Boy's Own Paper* world, that's all. You can count yourself lucky."

"Why?"

"It might have been the *Sunday Mirror*. The world is modelled after the popular magazines nowadays. My husband came out of ENCOUNTER. The question we have to consider is to which paper *they* belong. . . ."

GRAHAM GREENE, *Our Man in Havana*, p. 147.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the welfare of the people.... One must give the author his due: he sticks in his book rigidly to the subjective methodology of bourgeois historiography and its principle of illuminating not the objective course of events, nor the genuine historical facts, but only such things which can serve to justify the policy of imperialism.... The false version of the *Entente's* reactionary bourgeoisie about the ties between the Bolsheviks and the Kaiser's Germany has been exposed long ago. Even the bourgeois historians were forced to admit the absurd character of such inventions. However, Kennan cannot resist the temptation to use them as an argument for the "Allies" and against Soviet Russia.... He, of course, writes with approval about the activities of Trotsky, and scolds Soviet historians who described them as treacherous.... Kennan wrote his book to perform an important task for the present policy of the ruling circles of the U.S.A.; to deny the responsibility of American imperialism for the criminal war against the Soviet people who, as a result of the victory of the October Revolution, liberated itself from the yoke of the capitalists and landlords and entered the path of the construction of socialism. But such a feat cannot be performed—no matter how much Kennan juggles with the facts, arbitrarily omitting some and emphasising others. History just cannot be improved upon....

Marx and Freud

"The critics who hold Freudian positions undoubtedly occupy at present the most important place within the 'psychological' trends of the bourgeois literary studies in the U.S.A. Among them are such people as Alfred Kazin, Lionel Trilling, Frederick Hoffman, Leslie Fiedler, and others.... Freud was in the current of the subjective, idealist trends which flourished with the latest reactionary philosophy. The anti-Marxist, subjective, idealist orientation determined the popularity of Freudism in the bourgeois countries...."

B. GILELSON, LITERATURE IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOANALYSIS, *Voprosy Literatury* (Moscow, No. 1, 1959)

"Just as Marx could not anticipate heirs who would completely lack his culture and tradition, who in the name of his great insights into capitalist society would create a society far more tyrannical and unjust, so Freud... could not have imagined a psychoanalytically oriented psychiatry divorced from the humanistic and moral tradition.... In the last few years, the kind of psychoanalytical comment on literary works which used to be so arresting and valuable has come to seem a wholly mechanistic jargon."

ALFRED KAZIN, PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LITERARY CULTURE TO-DAY, *Partisan Review* (New York, No. 1, 1959)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Leonard Bernstein's Story

SOME critics—among them, P.P. in these pages—have been a little chilly about Leonard Bernstein's music for *West Side Story*. Bernstein, the "serious" conductor, the composer of symphonies, ballets, and a short opera, has been quite literally rapped over the knuckles with his own distinguished baton. This I believe to be unmerited. Several visits to the theatre, and prolonged listening to the LP record, have convinced me that this is not only among the best things that Bernstein has done—better for example than the excellently inventive *Candide*, which we are promised shortly in London—but the perfect and only possible musical realisation of the piece. It has been objected that Bernstein cannot where necessary throw off a tune. What then is it that has been ringing in our ears all these weeks? Does he lack style? or at best is his style rather synthetic? Eclectic, yes; but I think the best answer to this latter criticism is to take note of the highly idiomatic accent in even the pastiche numbers of *Candide*. Add to this the fact that he has evidently conceived his score operatically—which is a very different thing from "musical"-ly—and that he has at least supervised the orchestration at every point, and comparisons with other such admirable masters of the game as Cole Porter or Richard Rodgers become not so much odious as quite simply irrelevant. (In any case, surely the more revealing comparison would be with Weill or the Křenek of *Jonny spielt auf*—or Menotti—and I don't think that Bernstein would come too badly out of it.)

The fact is, I think, that Bernstein's music "works" in the theatre, in a way that it may not in the concert-hall or on the gramophone. Several friends have told me that before seeing the show they were unable to feel the force of much of the music heard on the record; but as soon as they had a remembered context—visual and dramatic—in which to fit it, they became immediately sensitive to its persuasions. I had much the same experience myself with an earlier work of this composer's, the *Second Symphony*, which I know only from the recording and consider an incomplete success, though I am assured by friends who saw it as a ballet, the Brecht-Auden *Age of Anxiety*, that it was highly effective in the theatre. All of which prompts me to suppose that whatever his ambitions in the direction of "pure music," it is as a dramatic composer that Bernstein is most likely to do his best work.

The "epic" quality of *West Side Story* has struck some critics as a trifle pretentious, though to others the framework of *Romeo and Juliet* embedded in its fabric like a kind of ghostly skeleton gives it a strangely moving kind of phosphorescence (rather in the way that *Mourning Becomes Electra* is constantly enriched by its Aeschylean references). Our reaction to this device must be to some extent a matter of taste, depending upon whether we judge the modern version worthy of its distinguished affiliation; personally I find it admirably justified, employed as it is with modesty and tact. But I feel that this quality goes a little deeper, and may have national origins. In much American art of the past thirty or so years there seems to be a kind of epic aspiration; it is often to be discerned in the music of Aaron Copland, for example, and is explicit in the novels of Hemingway and the plays of O'Neill; even in Bernstein's own one-act opera, *Trouble in Tahiti*, an ironical running commentary on the action is allotted to The Trio, "a Greek Chorus born of the radio commercial." The epic intentions of *West Side Story* should thus, I think, be appraised within a wider context.

JONATHAN MAYNE

London

Miracle at Notting Hill

I THINK your readers may be interested to hear of a heartening experience which comes from Notting Hill. At the time of the racial disturbances there nine English boys were sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Although I welcomed the statement of the Judge that all people in Britain, whatever their race or colour, should be given the right to walk our streets in peace and without danger of attack, I felt these individual sentences to be severe. I therefore tabled a question to the Home Secretary asking that they should be reviewed.

I did this feeling that my action might be misunderstood by some of my West Indian and African friends. To my delight, however, I subsequently heard that the Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the leading organisation among West Indians in this country, had sent an appeal to the Home Secretary asking for a reduction of the sentences on the English boys and, still more encouraging, I find that in Notting Hill the coloured people themselves had initiated a petition to the Home Secretary with the same object. They remarked that in their view the boys who had committed violence against them were as much victims of colour prejudice as they are themselves.

When Parliament resumes, I propose to table a motion urging that all the unfulfilled sentences imposed during the racial disturbances, whether committed by white or coloured persons, should be remitted. There are a few West Indians and Africans who are serving sentences in prison and some of the Africans who were fined are finding it difficult to maintain their payments because they are now unemployed.

I hope readers of ENCOUNTER will urge their Members of Parliament to support this proposal in the House of Commons.

FENNER BROCKWAY

House of Commons
London

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AUTHORS

Vladimir Nabokov (*who congratulates* ENCOUNTER'S *first five code-crackers, listed below*) *writes:*

"The first letters of the last paragraph of *The Vane Sisters* (ENCOUNTER, March, p. 10) form a phrase if read consecutively. Here is how it works:

> I Could Isolate, Consciously, Little. Everything Seemed Blurred, Yellow-Clouded, Yielding Nothing Tangible. Her Inept Acrostics, Maudlin Evasions, Theopathies—Every Recollection Formed Ripples Of Mysterious Meaning. Everything Seemed Yellowly Blurred, Illusive, Lost.

The coded message is:

> ICICLES BY CYNTHIA. METER FROM ME, SYBIL.

"The implication is that the ghost of Cynthia, who had been such a good painter of frost and thaw, (see p. 6, end of section 3) supplied the brilliant icicles which the narrator saw on the first page of the story, just before he learned that Cynthia was dead. On the same Sunday, a little later, he noticed the strange ruddy umbra cast upon the snow by a parking meter; this came from dead Sybil.

"Unless the acrostic is as accidental as ATOM in Shakespeare's sonnet (p. 9), Cynthia has proved the correctness of her theory (described on p. 6). My difficulty was to smuggle in the acrostic without the narrator's being aware that it was there, inspired to him by the phantoms. Nothing of this kind has ever been attempted by any author. . . ."

A prize of one guinea each is being sent to Philip Gabriel (Tadworth), Alan R. Smith (London), L. F. T. Smith (Cambridge), Mrs. T. M. Schmoller (West Drayton), and The Rev. M. B. Sewell (Llandeilo).

Reynolds Price (*whose story, "A Chain of Love," was published in* ENCOUNTER, *March 1958*), *writes:*

"*Troubled Sleep* began late one winter night last year when I was trying to sleep in frozen Oxford digs. That afternoon I had heard Professor Nevill Coghill's inaugural lecture. He had said (I believe) that one of the ends of literary studies is the knowledge of how it has felt to be human at various moments in time. I lay there, probing for the hot water bottle, wondering if it had ever felt like *this* before and remembering August nights in North Carolina when I and another boy and maybe a Negro who played with us would take our tent out (just into the trees but always in calling distance of the house) and set it up and then dare ourselves to go to sleep with dryflies and crickets and several things we couldn't explain throbbing around us in the dark.

"So I would try to show how that had felt, to prove it with a gentle pastoral picture. It went badly for six months with nothing but Oxford nights to work from and memories that, after so long away, I was suspicious of, and it had stopped dead when I came home last August and had again the nights I'd wondered about. *This* was how they were, and the story started from the first again in this flat, red country where the black pines look sucked from the land by heat and night comes down like a threat. It finished, not as gentle pastoral after all; more nearly as tragical-comical-historical-pastoral. Mostly tragical, I guess. . . ."

Stuart Holroyd *writes of himself:* "Perhaps by virtue of having spent the first six years of my life in that *other* City of the Seven Hills, Bradford, Yorks., I might qualify to stand beside Mr. Braine and Mr. Priestley as the third in a trio of literary 'gentlemen from Bradford' (for this esoteric allusion, see ENCOUNTER, June 1958). But the only germ of Yorkshire atavism I can discover in myself is a certain partiality for playing village cricket in the summer. When I was in Bradford last Christmas an uncle who had cherished glorious sporting ambitions for me said: 'You could be out there right now, lad, and you know it,' making a gesture in the general direction of Australia. He added: 'You're a block'ead, you know; you could still be doing all this writing in your spare time; a real nut-case!' Perhaps there is something in the romantic talk about the wisdom of unsophisticated people. Anyway, this particular nut-case is neither trekking around Australia in pursuit of the mythical Ashes (why doesn't some modern Kafka make something of that? It's a perfect image of absurdity and desolation), nor is he writing 'in his spare time.' He is living in London and working on a new play and a book (an essay on the heroic) while awaiting the publication in May of his second book, *Flight and Pursuit*."

Contributors to the **Art Book Section:**—HAROLD ROSENBERG'S new volume of collected essays, *The Tradition of the New*, will be published in New York this spring (Horizon Press); BASIL TAYLOR is Reader in General Studies at the Royal College of Art. LAWRENCE GOWING is Principal of the Polytechnic School of Art and of the Chelsea School of Art, and author of a standard work on Vermeer. MICHAEL KITSON is Lecturer in the history of art at the Courtauld Institute, University of London. JOHN IRWIN is Deputy Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum. THOMAS B. HESS is Executive Editor of *Art News* and author of *Abstract Painting: Background and American Phase*. KARL MILLER has been Literary Editor of *The Spectator* during the last year.

The editorial and business offices of ENCOUNTER are at 25 Haymarket, London S.W.1. A stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons should accompany MSS, otherwise they cannot be returned. For subscription details please see page 1.

ENCOUNTER is published by Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 7 John Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.1 for THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM, 104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France. PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Denis de Rougemont. SECRETARY-GENERAL: Nicolas Nabokov.

The views expressed in the pages of ENCOUNTER *are to be attributed to the writers, not to the sponsors*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED